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ABSTRACT

This book contains readings supplement information provided by a group of principals, teachers, and researchers participating in the U.S. Department of Education's National Satellite Teleconference, "Students at the Center." The March 1998 broadcast shared key findings on planning, implementing, and sustaining comprehensive school reform. Readings are organized around critical reform aspects: improving student learning, creating a professional learning community; and engaging families and communities. The readings specifically concern developing school-improvement plans, focusing on instruction, redefining school leadership, pursuing data-driven school improvement, identifying effective learning communities, and involving parents and the community in students' learning. Selections include: "Focus on School Improvement: A Planning Guide" (Far West Laboratory); "Theories of Learning and Teaching: What Do They Mean for Educators?" (Suzanne Wilson and Penelope Peterson); "Leadership and Organizational Vitality" (Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal); "Data Driven School Improvement" (James Johnson); "Professional Learning Communities: What Are They and Why Are They Important?" (Shirley Hord); "Constructing Communities of Cooperation" (Ann Lockwood); "Excellence in Professional Development and Professional Community" (Judith Warren Little); "School, Family, and Community Partnerships" (Mavis Sanders); "Community-Based Learning: A Foundation for Meaningful Educational Reform" (Thomas R. Owens and Changhua Wang); and "New Directions in Parent Involvement" (Norm Fruchter). Resources and directory information are provided. (MLH)

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Students at the Center:
A National Teleconference on School Reform

March 1998

Selected Readings

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Students at the Center:
A National Teleconference on School Reform

Selected Readings

Edited by Joan M. Shaughnessy

Prepared by:
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
School Improvement Program
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, Oregon 97204

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Introduction

Are you a member of a school reform team? A teacher committed to improving student learning in your school? A parent interested in supporting reform efforts in your local community? A business person wondering how your resources can best help your community's schools? This collection of selected readings was chosen with each of you in mind. It provides practical research-based resources for those engaged in comprehensive school reform—whoever you are and at whatever phase in the process you might be.

Background

The readings supplement information provided by a group of principals, teachers, and researchers who participated in the U.S. Department of Education's National Satellite Teleconference, *Students at the Center*. Each of these outstanding practitioners is engaged, in their own way, in comprehensive school reform at their schools located throughout the country. Broadcast on March 24, 1998, the teleconference acquainted viewers with key findings from research and practice on planning, implementing, and sustaining comprehensive school reform.

Comprehensive school reform integrates, in a coherent manner:

- effective research-based methods and strategies for student learning and instruction;
- high-quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development;
- measurable goals for student achievement;
- support within the school by faculty, administrators, and staff; and
- parental and community involvement.

At the center of all reform efforts is the improvement of student learning—for all students.

Focus

The readings are organized around the critical aspects of reform: improving student learning as the key, creating a learning community of professionals, and engaging families and communities. The readings help answer questions such as:

> How do we develop a school improvement plan?
> How do we focus our efforts on instruction?
> What kind of new leadership is needed in the schools?
> In what ways can we use data to drive school improvement?
> What are professional learning communities?
> What do schools with effective learning communities look like?
> How do we involve parents and the community in students' learning?

Each of the pieces was either commissioned by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement at the US Department of Education or produced by one of its contractors or grantees. At the end of each of the sections are self-study questions for use in your school.

Challenge

Today's schools face multiple challenges. But none is more important then improving student learning for all our students in all our schools at every grade level in every school district. You have begun this most important work. We in the US Department of Education applaud your efforts and encourage your continued commitment to this important goal. For when educators, families, and communities all work together, schools get better and students get the high quality education they need to lead productive lives.

Descriptions of Selected Readings

Overview of School Reform

This section provides a succinct introduction to the steps that will allow your school to develop a carefully thought out and comprehensive plan for improvement. It also describes considerations when implementing your plan and monitoring the success of changes that are made to improve student learning.

- *Focus on School Improvement: A Planning Guide*, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (currently WestEd), San Francisco, CA, 1995. (Excerpts)

Student Learning as the Goal of School Reform: Planning for Reform, Implementing Change, Sustaining Change

The three articles in this section review recent research on issues central to school reform. The Wilson and Peterson paper discusses new beliefs about how students learn, along with implications that this research has for teachers. This article would be an excellent stimulus when reviewing current instructional practices with teachers. Bolman and Deal's paper highlights both pragmatic and visionary issues related to shared leadership for school reform. It is highly recommended for principals and site councils who struggle to develop leadership capacity. The Johnson article emphasized the importance of student data for decision making in school reform. It should help schools revisit their practices for data collection, analysis and use of information.

- *Blue Ribbon Panel Working Paper—Theories of Learning and Teaching: What Do They Mean for Educators?* By Suzanne Wilson and Penelope Peterson. (Excerpts)
- *Blue Ribbon Working Paper—Leadership and Organizational Vitality*, by Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal. (Excerpts)
- "Data Driven School Improvement" by James Johnson, *ERIC Digest*, Number 109, January 1997.

Professional Learning Communities within Schools

The three articles in this section provide supplemental information to raise staff awareness about the importance of professional learning communities (PLC). The first two papers provide explanatory information about this concept. The Hord article explains the characteristics of these communities and summarizes the research findings and the Lockwood article describes how teachers' and principals' roles change when these communities form. The Lockwood paper also includes an instrument that staff can use to rate their own progress toward becoming a PLC. Little's paper portrays the structural changes and the professional development overhaul that schools will need to create and support professional learning communities.

- Professional Learning Communities: What Are They and Why Are They Important? By Shirley Hord, *Issues about Change*: Volume 6, #1, Newsletter from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, Texas.

- "Constructing Communities of Cooperation" by Anne Lockwood, *New Leaders for Urban Schools*, Newsletter from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Oak Brook, Illinois. Volume 1, Fall 1995.

- *Blue Ribbon Panel Working Paper—Excellence in Professional Development and Professional Community* by Judith Warren Little. (Excerpts)

Engaging Families and Communities

In this section, you will find background information about ways to involve families and communities in school reform work. The Sanders paper provides a succinct description of six types of parental involvement, while the Owens and Wang synthesis describes strategies for engaging students in the local community. The Fruchter, Galletta and White article adds another dimension by fleshing out the role that parents can play in school improvement and governance. All three of these papers provide examples of schools that have strengthened their reform efforts by expanding their work beyond their school grounds.

- *Blue Ribbon Panel Working Paper: School, Family and Community Partnerships* by Mavis Sanders. (Excerpts)

- *Topical Synthesis #8–Community-Based Learning: A Foundation for Meaningful Educational Reform* by Thomas R. Owens and Changhua Wang, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon, January 1966.

- "New Directions in Parent Involvement" by Norm Fruchter, Anne Galletta and J. White, published in *Equity and Choice*, Spring 1993.

Resources

This section provides a list of specific technical assistance centers and other federally supported agencies throughout the United States. The guide is organized into eleven sections, one for each type of provider. A map depicting service areas for all regional agencies begins each section. By locating the service provider that serves your area of the country and calling the phone numbers provided, your school can receive additional resources and guidance for your reform work.

We invite you to:
- contact any of the resources included in this section to learn more about comprehensive school reform
- seek out assistance from any one of several comprehensive school reform networks
- join networks and alliances actively engaged in comprehensive reform

For additional information available from the US Department of Education, you may either call 1-800-USA-LEARN or access the Department's homepage at http://www.ed.gov.

FOCUS
ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

A PLANNING GUIDE

Far West Laboratory
for Educational Research and Development

Far West Laboratory will join with Southwest Regional Laboratory in 1996 to become WestEd.

The complete 72 page book is available from West Ed, San Francisco, CA.

Prepare: Plan to Plan

The first phase in a meaningful plan involves laying the groundwork for all other phases and setting the tone for subsequent activities. Therefore, Step I is to prepare, **Plan to Plan**. This step or phase includes four main components. They are:

1. Establish a school improvement leadership team.
2. Review existing data and develop an understanding of the need for school improvement.
3. Construct a preliminary program/school profile based on current perceptions.
4. Build enthusiasm for moving forward in the process.

ESTABLISH A LEADERSHIP TEAM

A leadership group should be formed that will be committed to working through the detailed process of improvement planning. The team should consist of, but not be limited to, representatives from the district and school administration, regular and special programs (including teachers, assistants, and specialists), and parents. This team should be small -- at least three, but not more than five or six. It should bring together people who have different backgrounds, skills, and knowledge and who can work together toward a common goal.

UNDERSTAND THE GOALS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Focus improvement efforts on instruction.

Think about something important you have wanted to accomplish. What was a primary requirement? If you wanted to make something or get somewhere, you had to identify the goal or outcomes of interest. If you wanted to learn a new skill, such as playing tennis, the look and feel of a quality serve or volley guided your practice. Architects likewise need to develop a picture of how a house should look or be "configured" to be energy-efficient. In the same way, it is essential to have a clear picture of what a successful school will look like, what the outcome will be and how school improvement fits with this vision. To reach the goal, consider essential resources and strategies that will take you there.

Planning and implementing a process of improvement should be based on a thorough understanding of state and district policies and school reform efforts, as well as legal requirements of any state or federal-funded programs. A familiarity with current research on successful programs and on effective educational practices is also essential. It is important to give some thought to the general goals and intent of specific programs, such as Title I, bilingual or ESL, special education, or other. You should certainly give consideration to your own ideals and your vision of what you would like to accomplish for children in your school. It helps to keep those lofty ideas in mind.

It is also important to emphasize at this point the important goal of school improvement: *to improve learning opportunities for children*. With that goal kept firmly in mind, it is critical to think about the heart of the matter, the essentials. In this case, the essential aspect is instruction – the teaching-learning process. If a plan for improving a program or school is not based on a careful review of the instructional strategies being used, it is unlikely that desired outcomes will be the result. Extensive efforts to explore current information on effective instructional strategies in reading, writing, math, and other content areas are the key to success.

This is not to say that you should not include strategies in your plan for improving parent involvement, leadership, coordination, monitoring, and so forth. These aspects also contribute in significant ways to a strong program and to children's learning. However, if these factors are considered with no thought given to the instructional program, it is less likely that the desired improvement in learning will occur.

BUILD A PRELIMINARY PROFILE

A profile is a portrait of the school. It describes its key characteristics. It summarizes the initial perceptions of leadership team members as they respond to questions about the structure, content, and climate of the school and the programs within that school. The purpose of building a preliminary profile is to gauge current perceptions of team members and others in the school community. This should be an *informal* process and will indicate how well participants understand or perceive the current situation in the school.

WHAT ARE THE AREAS TO BE ASSESSED?

The first area to examine is the structure of the school and its programs. This area, including design, support and administration, requires an assessment of the goals and objectives of the school programs; coordination of programs; leadership – both instructional and administrative; mechanisms for recognizing excellence; opportunities for professional development and training; and school and program climate. In addition, serious thought should be given to service delivery models used in the various programs of the school. For example, are special services provided through pull-out models? Has thought been given to ways to extend time for instruction using before and after-school models or others? It is important to center some discussion on alternative models and options for operating the school's programs other than in the ways you "always have".

Curriculum and Instruction

A second critical area is the instructional program and the curriculum on which it is based. Assessment in this area focuses on the suitability and effectiveness of instructional materials, methods and approaches. This should involve an

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Areas to be Assessed

- Program design, support and administration
- Curriculum and instruction
- Assessment and evaluation
- Out-of-school environment

Assess:
Know the Situation

The goal of this type of inquiry should be a profile of the school with a review of its strengths and weaknesses in meeting the needs of the students it serves.

examination or exploration of current research and thinking on effective practices for teaching, especially in the areas of reading, writing, and math. Some thought should be given to the degree of coherence in the school or grade-level philosophy that governs daily instruction. This examination should also include a consideration of classroom management strategies, including expectations for student achievement and coordination among programs. Topics such as staff development and use of academic learning time should be reviewed.

A third focal area is the monitoring and evaluation system. An appraisal of this area involves asking questions such as: Is student progress closely monitored? Are feedback and positive reinforcements provided to students, parents, and staff? In what ways are evaluation results used to effect improvements in the school's programs? Do assessment results for certain students or groups of students imply particular success or needs? Are the instruments that are used to measure student success closely tied to the curriculum and to classroom instruction? Have multiple assessment measures been identified and integrated in a comprehensive assessment system? These and other similar questions will allow you to move beyond compliance and focus on the use of assessment and evaluation data to design a school program that better serves children's needs.

Assessment Methods and Tools

Achievement Data
Self-assessments
Observations
Interviews
Curriculum Review

* * *

Plan: Define a Vision and Develop Strategies

...Establish high expectations.

DEFINE A VISION

Any effective plan must begin with a vision, an image of what the outcome of the plan will be. A mission statement defines this vision and guides the planning process. Therefore, the first step in the planning stage is to build a mission statement. This can be tricky, but is important. Often, an effective mission statement will be in the following format:

> Our mission is to ..... to be achieved by .....
> which will result in .....

The statement describes the mission, how it will be achieved, and what the intended outcomes are. A mission statement should, as educators well know, have a visionary tone; it should really address the lofty purposes of education. (There is the risk, of course, of becoming trite, using hackneyed expressions, or of being just plain corny, but in the final analysis, it is better to have thought in these terms than not. It is better to determine if you, indeed, have a vision of what you want to accomplish for children, or if you just haven't thought about it).

SET GOALS

Goals guide improvement planning and serve as an ultimate standard for evaluating the effectiveness of the improvement effort. As with the vision, it is important to be clear. Several characteristics contribute to effective goal setting. Improvement goals should:

- be relatively few in number in order to build the potential for early success;
- focus on specific aspects of the school and its programs;
- build on identified strengths while improving areas in need of improvement;
- be written in terms of student achievement outcomes;
- include specific (multiple) measures or indicators of achievement outcomes;
- include a timeline for achieving the goals; and
- include ways for determining if specific goals were met

While goals need to be realistic, it is important to be bold. Worrying about constraints at the goal-setting stage will limit what you are able to accomplish.

Steps to Developing a Plan

Define Vision

↓

Set Goals

↓

Identify Barriers

↓

Specify Strategies
Specific Tasks
Necessary Resources
Timeline
Monitoring and Evaluation

↓

Review and Refine

IDENTIFY ACTUAL/POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Once goals are set, actual and potential barriers need to be identified in order to incorporate into the plan steps for overcoming them. There may exist district-level constraints, such as budget allowances or policy. The school may also present hurdles, such as a staff seemingly unwilling to change. Other barriers may stem from the community, such as lack of resources. However, while these constraints are real, in no way does this imply that they cannot be addressed in a creative and effective manner.

One important barrier to avoid is the one that involves placing blame. Examples include blaming students' families or limited experiences, finding fault with administrators or past decisions, attributing difficulties to staffing changes, lamenting the lack of resources, and on and on. If the tendency is to place the blame on student "differences" in native language or culture, it is important to alter the perception of these differences to see them as strengths on which to build. If the tendency is to assign blame in other ways, it is important to shift that energy back to a consideration of the opportunity that is being presented to make constructive changes in the school program – always in the best interest of children. The goal is to find keystones on which to build and use in determining how to move from the vision to action plans. Steps to overcoming barriers should be part of the plan and need to be specified.

SPECIFY STRATEGIES AND STEPS OF PLAN

Vision defined, goals set, resources and barriers identified – it is now time to specify strategies and actual steps of the improvement plan. A strategy describes a general method which will involve multiple means or activities to respond to identified need(s) and corresponding improvement goals. Strategies may focus on:

- Developing staff capabilities;
- Implementing alternative instructional delivery models;
- Improving instructional approaches;
- Coordinating the scope and sequence of the curriculum;
- Coordinating the core curriculum with special instruction;
- Promoting a positive school climate;
- Providing appropriate support services;
- Fostering parent involvement; or
- Enhancing leadership.

Give staff and others involved – directly or indirectly – the opportunity to provide feedback. As in planning, showing individuals that their opinions and efforts are valued will make the difference between successful implementation and a plan that seems to have gone nowhere. In addition, the leadership team may not always be the ones directly involved in implementing the plan, and therefore, feedback from others will be invaluable in monitoring how the plan is working.

It may help you to consider the following highlights from research on successful implementation:

- Leadership is provided.
- Improvement efforts meet local needs and fit local conditions.
- Those asked to alter practice are in some way involved in all phases of design/planning.
- Improvement results in visible outcomes, often in the short run.
- Support is evidenced by school and district administrators.
- Professional development is provided as needed to strengthen use of effective practices (methods may include demonstration lessons, joint instructional planning, visits to successful programs, attending conferences, and so on).

- Improvement effort is explicitly managed and monitored.
- Local resources are allocated for improvement.
- Ongoing assistance is provided.
- Incentives are provided.
- Positive administrative-staff relations exist.

STRUCTURE THE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHANGE AND GENERATE SUPPORT

Schools committed to continuously improving their processes and comprehensively implementing the school vision would do well to adopt implementation support strategies at the teacher level. These support strategies might include any kind of peer collaboration such as peer coaching – the pairing of teachers to work together to establish plans, to observe each other implementing specific elements, and to provide feedback to each other. They might also include collaborative teacher research – establishing hypotheses and studying the impact of the specific implementation efforts. Or it might mean working with staff-developed performance measures for accountability and direction in implementation that indicate where the whole staff and individual teachers are in the implementation process. Failure to build in support strategies is one of the most common reasons plans are not fully implemented (Bernhardt, 1994).

MONITOR AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR FEEDBACK

Remember that the implementation of an improvement plan is not an all-or-nothing process. *Implement what you can when you can.* Gather data as you go along, and review, reassess, revise, or recycle as you gain new insights.

Select areas of the school improvement plan to monitor and evaluate at various times. Components of your plan may focus on program design, curriculum and instruction, coordination, parent involvement, staff development, or assessment. In each of these areas, there may be one or more activities designed to promote improvement. Make decisions about which aspects to review and when. These decisions should follow from a consideration of which aspects are most important and most in need of monitoring. For example, if a goal of the improvement plan is to improve instruction in reading and the strategy for this goal was to provide inservice to teachers, then monitoring could take place at different points in time:

- **Before inservice**: Is the assistance that will be offered to teachers going to be useful? Are teachers aware of the training, and how do they feel about it? Is there lack of support for this idea? If so, does this mean abandoning it or working on staff motivation first?
- **During the time of inservice**: Were teachers provided with adequate training and information? Will they be able to use this information and translate it into classroom practice, or is a follow-up session necessary?
- **Some time after the inservice**: Is there evidence of improved instructional strategies? How is that determined? If there is little change, what are the next steps?

Determine what questions you want answered. Asking the right questions allows you to gather information about almost anything you want to know about the project. How do students feel about new instructional approaches? Do teachers and assistants feel that inservice training has been useful? Are students reading more books? Have math problem-solving skills improved? The most useful questions are ones that are clearly stated, specific, and relevant to those who make decisions. If they are too vague or general, they will be difficult to answer, and the results may be useless. In clarifying the questions, it is also a good idea to anticipate possible outcomes. The answer to a question is useless if

Steps in Monitoring Plan

- Select areas of the improvement plan to monitor and evaluate.
- Determine what questions you want answered.
- Identify how and what information you will collect.
- Think about how you will use the information.

there is nothing you can do about it.

Identify how and what information you will collect to answer your questions. This step takes a lot of thought and planning. You do not want to end up with stacks of useless information and your evaluation questions unanswered. You must also be sure that your sample of information is not so small or restricted that you make judgements or decisions that are based on information that is too limited. For example, if you want to know if the 12 instructional assistants in your program are applying information they gained from a training program, it is not enough to have feedback from three of them. In other words, one needs a representative sample that is large enough to provide reliable information.

Review informal sources and check with your local Comprehensive Assistance Center for help in finding, reviewing, and selecting methods and instruments for collecting appropriate information to answer the questions you have defined. Some suggestions are provided below:

- *Ask staff.* Use oral or written surveys or informal discussions.
- *Examine materials.* If new resources, programs, or materials have been purchased, review them as a team to assess their quality and whether or not they appear to be adequate for the strategy you defined in your plan. For example, if you indicated that there needed to be a greater emphasis on advanced skills in the instructional program, and someone else had the responsibility of selecting and purchasing materials, you may determine they are not really satisfactory for accomplishing the goal.
- *Observe teachers/students.* If practices like clearer instruction, smoother transitions between instructional activities, and greater use of positive recognition are in your plan, then you may need to do periodic observations of the practices in action to see if progress is being made.
- *Ask students.* If practices have a direct and

visible effect on students, ask them if they think practices are changing and how well they are working. Check their attitudes about the instruction they receive. Ask them for suggestions for improvement.

- *Review various types of data about children's learning.* Do not wait for the results of the annual required evaluation to determine if the program improvement plan has had the desired positive effect on student achievement.
- *Use multiple techniques.* Focus monitoring efforts on the most important or pivotal strategies.

Think about how you will use the information that you collect. Evaluation data needs to be summarized and reduced into a concise and usable format without sacrificing important detail. Sources of data may include surveys or questionnaires, observations, existing records, interviews, or student performance assessments. Often the information needs to be presented to others who may not have been involved in the collection process or who need to participate in the decision-making process. The important aspect is to generate recommendations or make decisions about the program, and these should be grounded in a careful review of the information.

Monitoring and formative data can be critical to program success. They are important for keeping informed of progress by answering the question, "How are we doing in regard to our program improvement plan?" In other words, "Are we doing *all* that we said we would do, *as* we said we would do it, *when* we said we would do it?" This type of data should also help in determining the need for refining program plans or for identifying barriers that hinder the full implementation and success of the school improvement plan. In addition, the information can play a direct role in further planning. Making thoughtful decisions based on data is critical to increasing the effectiveness of any school program.

Are we doing all that we said we would do, as we said we would do it, when we said we would do it?

Students at the Center:
A National Teleconference on School Reform

Selected Readings About Student Learning

a) *Blue Ribbon Panel Working Paper: Theories of Learning and Teaching: What Do They Mean for Educators?* by Suzanne Wilson and Penelope Peterson. **(EXCERPTS)**
b) *Blue Ribbon Panel Working Paper: Leadership and Organizational Vitality*, by Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal. **(EXCERPTS)**
c) "Data Driven School Improvement" by James Johnson, *ERIC Digest*, Number 109, January 1997.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WORKING PAPER

BENCHMARKS FOR SCHOOLS

Theories of Learning and Teaching: What Do They Mean for Educators?

U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

The following is excerpted from OERI's Working Paper on "Theories of Learning and Teaching: What Do They Mean for Educators" by Suzanne M. Wilson and Penelope L. Peterson (September 1997). The complete 30-page paper is available from the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Working papers were commissioned to promote the exchange of ideas among researchers and practitioners.

Introduction

Education has always been awash with new ideas about how and what to teach. Teachers and administrators are regularly bombarded with suggestions for reform: new curricula, new teaching strategies, new forms of assessment. Integral to making … decisions (about what to change) is a solid understanding of the foundational beliefs and theories that should drive teaching, ideas about how students learn, what they should learn, and how teachers need to think and act to enable student learning. A handful of significant ideas underlie most of the current reforms. In this paper we set out to explore those notions. Our set includes four ideas about learning: that learning is a process of construction, that learning is a social phenomenon as well as an individual experience, that learning is situation- and context-specific, and that learners come with differences that are seen as resources, not problems-to-be-fixed. None of these ideas are new, but each plays a significant role in contemporary educational thought.

Some Not-so-New Ideas about Learning, Learners, and What is to be Learned

Learning as a process of active construction. Perhaps the most critical shift in education in the past 20 years has been a move away from a conception of learner-as-sponge toward an image of learner-as-active-constructor of meaning. (Our earlier) ideas were grounded in a theory of learning that focused on behavior. One behavior leads to another, learning theorists argued, and so if teachers act in a certain way, students will act in a certain way. The mind was a "black box" of little concern. But contemporary theorists have put mind back in the learning equation. Referred to as "constructivism," these theories of learning are based on a growing body of empirical and theoretical work that illustrates the powerful role of prior knowledge and experience in learning new information.

This new emphasis on student construction of meaning necessarily has led to increased attention on students' interpretations. When we acknowledge that students interpret -- and don't automatically absorb -- the information and ideas they encounter in the world, the links between learning and teaching become more complicated. Rather than seeing learning as a natural result of teaching, learning is seen as inherently "problematic," for teachers might create opportunities for students to learn, but teachers cannot control students' interpretations. Teachers become responsible for diagnosing students' interpretations and helping them alter, edit, and enrich them.

Learning as a social phenomenon. A second significant shift has involved more attention to learning's social aspects. Although there is much that one can learn alone, in solitude and peaceful silence, conversation and debate -- social occasions -- also play a critical role in learning. Think of the small child when first learning to identify dogs. Initially, everything with four legs may be pointed to as "dog": a neighborhood cat, a cow in a field passed while on a drive through the countryside, the gerbil next door. The child learns to distinguish between cat and dog, cow and dog, rodent and dog by making public her claims and having parents gently amend her pronouncements. Likewise the mathematician hunches over her work alone in an attic study for months, perhaps years, learning: reading books and others' papers, playing with numbers, scratching out alternative solutions. When she thinks she has got it right, she delivers a paper at a conference or submits an article for publication. And in so doing, she puts her "knowledge" to a public test where is shaped, edited, sometimes rejected by conversation, debate, and discourse. And while there is considerable debate between theorists about the finer, more subtle theoretical details, there are some shared concerns and beliefs. First is the point that there are some things we learn best in the company of others, for making one's knowledge public is an important stage in learning. Second, and central, is the idea that knowing and learning is not located solely in an individual's mind. Rather, knowledge and learning exist in the interactions between individuals and the contexts in which they live. Third, it follows that it is in these public settings that standards lie: The norms for testing the quality of a performance are determined by groups, not individuals. In all areas of knowledge, groups of mathematicians and scientists, historians and writers together determine -- through criticism, debate, proof, validation and the like -- their shared standards.

Although social groups have always played an important role in an individual's learning, schools have traditionally focused on the individual aspects of learning. Students have worked quietly at their desks, writing papers, filling out worksheets, taking tests, reading textbooks. Ideas have not been submitted to public debate. In part this is because teachers must manage groups of children who are not there voluntarily. But recent developments have asked teachers to incorporate more activities that take advantage of what we can learn in social settings, including cooperative groups, classroom discussions, and student performances. In so doing, teachers are asked to focus not only on individual students, but also on the development of "communities of learners."

Learning as context-specific. For a long time, psychologists tried to develop a general and generalizable theory of thinking that would work across all subject matters, all contexts, all individuals. The pursuit of this general theory has been less-than-successful for several reasons. First, it was assumed that the locus of thinking was in an individual's mind, instead of in the interaction between the individual and the environment. Second, it was assumed that thinking and learning were standard, generic processes. Any two people, the assumption was, learn in exactly the same way.

Frustrated in their search for a general theory, psychologists have explored other possibilities. In so doing, they have concluded that learning and thinking are "situated," in other words, that contexts matter. For example, cognitive anthropologists who have studied mathematics in "real" life -- the mathematics involved in being a warehouse worker, for example, or a delivery person -- have discovered that such workers have highly developed mathematical skills. Yet these very same people do poorly on standardized tests. Theorists argue that the contexts in which we learn and work fundamentally shape what we do and know. This means that knowledge and skill cannot be thought of as easily transferable from situation to situation.

Learner differences are a resource. Another significant shift has occurred in the value that we place on individual and group differences. One of the self-evident truths of schooling is that learners come with different experiences, capacities, understandings, and backgrounds. For a long time, however, we spoke of differences as static abilities that determine how much or how fast a learner can. Differences were considered to be deficits: If a child came to school with a background different than someone else, teachers often talked about what he did not know or had not done. But as our country continues its move toward a democratic, multicultural nation, we have been legitimately chastised for this deficit thinking and urged to think of differences as a resource to use, not as an obstacle to overcome. Rather than treating learners' starting places as "gaps," teachers need to assume that students start in sensible places. Teachers need to "give learners reason," by respecting and understanding learners' prior experiences and understandings, assuming that these can serve as a foundation on which to build bridges to new understandings.

Knowing something involves both the what and the how. The fifth and final significant shift concerns assumptions about what students should learn. No longer is it acceptable for students to quietly master only the rules and facts of a discipline. Contemporary educational reform demands that students have a more flexible understanding of mathematics and language arts, biology and physics, geography and history. They must know the basics, but they must also know how to use those basics to identify and solve nontraditional problems. ...If students are to leave school armed with the knowledge and skill necessary to participate as citizens and thinkers, they need to know many things. They need to learn about the ideas, theories, facts, procedures of a discipline..., they need extensive experience with the ways in which ideas are argued and proved in disciplinary fields, as well as a deep and thorough understanding of the facts and concepts in each field. Children need to write, the reformers argue, so that they can read critically and not be persuaded by spurious text. Students need to do statistical analyses of problem that they themselves identify so that they might be better consumers of statistics used daily by the pros. Students need to read sources and work on their own historical interpretations *so that they* are better able to critique the ones they read.

The Implications for Teaching and Teachers

Teaching as intellectual work. Perhaps the most significant implication of these ideas about learning and knowledge is they imply that thoughtful teachers are intellectuals who think both about subject matter and students, constructing bridges between the two. Good teachers must think hard about what they want their students to learn, contemplating myriad questions like: What is interesting about this subject for my students? What ideas and concepts are particularly difficult? Why? What do my students already know that might help? What do they believe that might get in the way? How do students construct their understandings?

The current emphasis on teacher thinking and decision-making has led to a change in the way that we think about, observe, and evaluate teachers and their teaching. Research on teaching now entails asking teachers why they act as they do and what they learn from their experiences. Administrators no longer crouch in the back of classrooms, filling out checklists of behaviors. Instead, teachers and their colleagues (other teachers, principals, curriculum coordinators) are expected to talk about why they taught as they did, answering questions about their reasons, rationales, and reflections: Why did you teach this lesson? What did you hope to accomplish? What would you change?

Teachers as listeners and inquirers. In many ways, teachers must act as scientists, investigating students' thinking, finding ways to learn about how a particular student is actively constructing her understanding. Teachers must probe students' understanding, sometimes even interviewing them about their thoughts and logic. Instead of simply being founts of knowledge, teachers will have to become inquirers, always asking questions, testing hypotheses about what their students know, and don't.

Learning to inquire -- both in class in the company of students, alone in personal reflection, using alternative forms of assessment, and outside of class in the company of adults -- is unnerving, time consuming, and requires the development of new knowledge and skill. Knowing how to listen is a skill to be developed, not a inherited trait granted all teachers, therapists, lawyers, and doctors. It requires a sensitivity to better and worse questions and the capacity to read between the lines of a child's response.

Teachers as (team) coaches. If learning involves social interaction and if knowing involves both knowledge of facts and processes of proof, then teaching will also require better classroom discourse. To do so, students -- like mathematicians or historians -- will need to learn how to argue with one another in intellectually productive ways. Teachers will have to create occasions for such discourse, and act as rudder, keeping the collective on course. The ideal classroom will no longer be one in which 30 students are always silently working. Instead, students will spend some time working in alternative arrangements -- small and large groups -- talking to each other often, making public their personal knowledge and beliefs, constructing and testing their knowledge with peers and teachers. To help them, teachers will have to understand when and how to use different pedagogical approaches. Teachers must systematically consider their goals and their students, the subject matter they want students to learn, and select pedagogical strategies that will enable student learning.

Much current talk of teaching explores the use of alternative metaphors; instead of teacher-as-teller, we hear about teacher-as-coach, teacher-as-collaborator, teacher-as-guide. The appeal of the teacher-as-coach metaphor lies in the fact that coaches support players as they learn to demonstrate mastery -- even excellence. Coaches must help players develop foundational knowledge and skill, must provide opportunities for practice, must keep an eye on the structure and timing of a player's learning.

In addition to helping students learn through doing, coaches must (find) ways to help a team collaborate and win. This often means knowing each player's individual talents and creating team strategies that take advantage of those talents; teachers who believe that knowledge is constructed and that groups of students and teachers working together can learn more than working at isolated stations must find ways to construct a community of learners that takes full advantage of the breadth of knowledge and experience different members of that community bring.

WORKING PAPER

BENCHMARKS FOR SCHOOLS

Leadership
and
Organizational Vitality

U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

The following is excerpted from OERI's Working Paper on "Leadership and Organizational Vitality" by Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal (September 1997). The complete 16-page paper is available from the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Working papers were commissioned to promote the exchange of ideas among researchers and practitioners.

Introduction

Historically, the image of the leader was a strong, usually male, heroic figure who knew what needed to be done and directed others to do it. This model of leadership dove-tailed with the hierarchical, top-down model of bureaucracy that came to dominate both business and educational organizations during much of the twentieth century.

The old models were reasonably serviceable until a series of economic, social, and technical changes forced a transformation in thinking about organization and leadership. Only a century ago, most human activity and organizations were much smaller, simpler and more localized. In such a world, a single decision-maker could process much of the relevant information make decisions, and announce them. In the modern world of rapid change, globalization, and gigantic institutions, no one individual can possibly process all the information or make all the decisions. Leaders now need to be sophisticated analysts of complexity who focus less on deciding and more on designing systems of multiple decision nodes.

The new circumstances call for a view of the leader as a creator of possibilities – dreams of mutual learning and appreciation, and visions or creative ways to work constructively and collaboratively at cultural boundaries. To weather this transitional context, school leaders need to understand two basic realities about school leadership:

1. **Leadership is a three-way relationship among leaders, constituents and concepts.**

Though leadership is typically seen as a property of individuals, recent research confirms that focusing only on characteristics of individuals provides a very partial and distorted picture of leadership. Individual leaders *do* make a difference, sometimes a critical difference. But constituents and situations are very powerful forces, often favoring the status quo.

2. **Leadership is not a top-down influence for those in high positions. It is a process of reciprocal influence centered on questions of purpose, values, and strategies.**

Leadership has traditionally been viewed as something provided by a few people in prominent places. We look to principals to solve the problems of schools, and superintendents to solve the problems of districts. Marshall (1992) in her studies of "atypical" administrators, Lortie (1993, 1994) in his studies of Chicago principals, and Johnson (1993, 1994, 1996), in her research on new superintendents, all found that local history, values, and assumptions constrained possibilities for individuals who hoped to provide leadership. Murphy (1994) noted the context of school reform in the 1990s often leaves school principals feeling overwhelmed and floundering amidst a surfeit of pressures and dilemmas. This research implies that schools of the future will need to be designed and structured very differently from the top-down, bureaucratic patterns of the past.

What Kind of School Leadership Do We Need?

In the face of intractable problems and sizable expectations, school leaders need clear vision, a strong knowledge base, highly developed communications skills, enlightened cultural sensitivity, and a deep commitment to educational outcomes. Better education for more children in the face of dwindling resources and fiscal constraints requires school leaders who can mobilize people, groups, and community resources to confront and resolve challenging problems moving schools toward the fulfillment of multiple goals.

Given these challenges we can no longer afford to look to principals alone for leadership in school buildings.

Several propositions provide guidelines for encouraging school leadership to effectively confront conditions of the emerging 21st century.

1. Leadership in effective schools will be a collaborative process engaging multiple stakeholders: administrators, teachers, parents, students, and others.

School leaders possess authority and are expected to use their legitimate power in making everyday managerial decisions. But they can rarely make significant changes by fiat. They must rely heavily on their ability to persuade, which depends on the quality of their relationships with constituents. Murphy (1994) found that...."Teachers appear substantially more willing to participate in all areas of decision-making if they perceive their relationships with their principals as more open, collaborative, facilitative and supportive. They are much less willing to participate if they characterized their relationships with principals as closed, exclusionary, and controlling." Similarly, Lortie (1994) reports that elementary teachers in Chicago "insisted on approachability and openness" and "wanted to believe in the principal's sincerity and to trust his or her moral commitment." In sum, memos and commands need to be replaced by a constant give and take among all members of a school community.

A promising path that school leaders may use to engage multiple stakeholders, ... involves creating teams for specific tasks. Many efforts to promote "shared governance" have focused primarily on school-level decision-making. Such efforts often bog down in the face of conflict and frustration. An alternative is self-managing teams given responsibility not for schoolwide decision-making, but for more specific educational tasks (for example, the K-2 program, or the science curriculum). Experience in other sectors shows that self-managing work teams are an extremely powerful mechanism for fostering commitment, innovation and flexibility. The key is to ensure each team (1) has a clear focus, (2) possesses the authority and control of resources that it needs to do its job, and (3) knows for what and how it is accountable.

2. Schools need a focused educational vision.

Without vision, a school is directionless and adrift. Constituents expect leaders to provide a sense of direction and tend to be highly critical of those who have "no vision." Yet leaders who try to impose their own ready-made vision on a school or district often founder in the face of limited authority and conflict rampant among multiple constituencies.

Murphy (1994) (reports that) "Visioning is a critical function of principals working to facilitate transformational change at their schools. A key difference in restructuring schools is that the principal is not the sole or primary determiner of the vision." Johnson (1996) found that it was rare for leaders to bring an educational vision unchanged from one place to another. More often, leaders work with colleagues and constituents to orchestrate a process through which a vision emerges. The impact of the vision, though, depended less on how it emerged than whether it was clear and made sense to constituents.

Research consistently suggests that nothing a principal does is more important than helping to build a schoolwide commitment to educational outcomes and that this is a "corporate responsibility" (Lortie, 1994) which falls particularly on the principal.

3. Leadership and management are both important.

Warren Bennis's dictum that many organizations are over-managed but under-led is only half true in education. Schools are often both under-managed and under-led. Miles (1993) shows external constraints and weak information systems both hinder effective management of a school district's scarce resources. For example, categorical funding mandates make it very difficult to move resources where they are most needed, but many school districts have limited understanding of where their money goes. They often do not know how much they spend on classroom instruction, nor how their spending patterns compare to others.

Much of the leadership impact of both superintendents and principals occurs through managerial decisions (such as developing budgets, allocating resources, hiring staff and implementing policy). Lortie found that teachers' assessment of principals' effectiveness was heavily determined by such managerial qualities as ability to ensure a timely flow of supplies and materials. While managerial qualities are a necessary component of school leadership, such qualities alone are not sufficient.

4. Educational leaders must be effective political leaders.

Moving from traditional, bureaucratic schools presents many political challenges: how to build the support and investments from diverse stakeholders who can make or break any effort at educational reform. In a world of turbulence, scarcity, diversity, and conflict, astute school leaders need the skills of constructive politicians the ability to develop a direction, build a base of support, and to manage relations with both allies and opponents. This requires four key political skills:

(1) Agenda setting. Effective leaders are able to develop an agenda for change that takes account of both aspirations and political reality -- an elegant integration of the desirable and the possible. Reflecting on his many years in educational administration, Warren Bennis made the deceptively simple observation, "It struck me that I was most effective when I knew what I wanted."

(2) *Mapping the political terrain.* It makes little sense to plunge into a mine field without knowing where the explosives are buried, yet school administrators unwittingly do it all the time -- they launch new initiatives with little or no effort to map the political field. Kotter (1985) suggests that the first two steps in any influence process are: (1) Identify relevant relationships (figure out who needs to be led), and (2) assess who might resist, why, and how strongly (figure out where the leadership challenges will be).

(3) N*etworking and forming coalitions.* A good political map helps with the first task in building networks and coalitions: figuring out whose help you need. The second is to develop relationships with these people so that they will be there when you need them. No strategy will work without a power base. School administrators can get little done without the cooperation of others, often large numbers of others, including teachers, administrative colleagues, parents, students and support staff

(4) Bargaining and negotiating. From a political perspective, bargaining is central to all decision-making. Negotiation is needed whenever two or more parties with some interests in common and others in conflict need to reach agreement. Principals, teachers and parents may all agree that the school should do what is best for children, yet differ sharply on what children need or on how it can be achieved

5. Leadership in schools is a highly symbolic and spiritual enterprise.

Bolman and Deal (1991, 1992) found attention to cultural issues of meaning, belief and faith is vital to leadership effectiveness across gender, sector and culture, looming even larger in schools than in other organizations. Sergiovanni (1992) argues that the moral dimension is at the heart of school leadership. Schools are central to a community's deeply held sense of itself and faith in its future. Deal (1995) argues that overemphasizing the rational side of school management while ignoring the spiritual dimension is a recipe for widespread disappointment and despair. Bolman and Deal (1997) define soul as "a bedrock sense of who we are, what we care about, and what we deeply believe in," and argue that such clarity is essential to the effectiveness of both leaders and institutions.

6. Leaders need ideas and versatility.

In seeking the ideas they need, effective leaders draw upon others within and outside the school, integrating different ideas with their own. Educational initiatives take root in schools only when teachers, principals, parents, and teachers understand, own, and shape them.

Promoting teacher leadership is an obvious strategy for generating ideas from within. Both training and tradition encourage teachers to focus primarily inside their classrooms. Too often they do not see themselves as leaders with a broader responsibility for the health of the institution in which they are embedded. Teachers are generally not expected to lead, and they are given virtually no time or resources even if they might want to. Teachers need more preparation for leadership, coupled with roles that encourage them to lead. The traditional assumption that only principals provide leadership is a recipe for frustration and burnout for administrators. It also encourages isolation and a diminished sense of responsibility for teachers.

Many ideas and initiatives for reforms come from outside. Effective schools need to be actively engaged in learning, constantly seeking new ideas and options from a variety of sources. Otherwise, teachers, principals and parents get too immersed in day to day regularities. While they may know a great deal about what's wrong, they are often unsure or pessimistic that significant change is possible. Outsiders play a critical role in providing new possibilities and ideas -- curricula, learning objectives, teaching methods, discipline strategies. Outsiders are also needed to help to generate resources, support and room to experiment. Too often, traditional schools are closed and isolated. They need instead to reach out and actively seek engagement with external constituents.

ERIC DIGEST

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Data-Driven School Improvement

By James H. Johnson

Effective educators make effective decisions, decisions based on accurate information. If knowledge is power, then studying the current abilities, skills, attitudes, and learning styles of students empowers educators to adjust the curriculum to achieve whatever goals the school and district have chosen.

When educators study their schools and classes, they seek an answer to an ageless question: Is it good because we've been doing it for a long time, or is it good because we have tangible evidence of its worth (James McLean 1995)? In many instances one must conclude the former because no evidence exists to support the latter.

One solution is to collect data on student learning that are both timely and accurate.

Can Data Use Improve Education?

McLean contends that "implementation of a complete program of data collection and use can lead to the improvement of education as has no other educational innovation of the last century." Fundamental to this effort is equipping teachers and administrators with the skills and inclination to ask, "Is there a better way?"

Traditionally, data collected in schools have been used to assess student performance. But with the growing decentralization of power in most districts, educators are more likely to rely on data to help them make better choices and uncover better ways of serving students and the community.

Educators routinely evaluate reading, writing, and math achievement, but they rarely assess management skills, individual learning styles, or other elements that may affect student achievement.

"We do the testing," said Marilyn Olson, of the Lane Education Service District, "and we get the individual student's scores back, but there's no concerted effort to interpret the data and work with them" (Johnson 1996).

Olson is currently involved with a project to create a database "that is consistent and accurate enough so that we can use it to make program changes." The goal is to enable educators to collect accurate information on students so they can make adjustments to teaching styles or curricula to gain measurable improvements. Students experiencing difficulty can be identified and helped earlier than is currently possible.

"Right now," Olson says, "we've got different teachers dealing with different data and they don't talk to each other, so a student slips through and no one recognizes the discrepancies in the student's data."

What Types of Data Should Be Collected?

Data are endemic in educational settings. As Richard Wallace (1996) reports, "School districts usually gather much more data than they can effectively use." The challenge is to analyze the information and use it wisely. Many believe the logical starting point is to make better use of existing or archival data (Wallace, Emily Calhoun 1994, McLean). These data include statistics on attendance, grades, referrals, retentions, and standardized-test results. When compiled and reported on a regular basis, archival data provide a baseline of school operations and can be used to make comparisons among similar schools.

With minimal effort, these data can often be disaggregated or broken down. Often done by grade, gender, race, or socioeconomic background, disaggregation can reveal previously unrecognized patterns that, in turn, may suggest areas in need of improvement.

With varying degrees of effort, other classes of data can be collected. Examples include survey results, interviews, numbers of books read, and other information on student achievement. These data typically require development of a means to collect and analyze the information (Calhoun). Data that may be more difficult to collect and interpret objectively include evaluations of student work, such as portfolios and exhibitions.

Should Teachers Serve as Researchers?

Traditionally, educational researchers have been the ones to proclaim various educational practices as either effective or ineffective. Principles of effective instruction are often drawn from large-scale studies.

However, teachers do not work in large-scale, static settings. They face unique sets of students who respond variably to different strategies. Hence applying academic research findings to individual classrooms can be problematic.

One alternative to overreliance on the findings of large-scale studies is for educators to assume the role of researcher. By studying their students, teachers can bring the academic findings down to earth, as it were, and discover what works in their specific classroom.

Susan Black (1996) equates teacher research to the work done by anthropologists or ethnographers. "They are able to observe the cultural scene closely. . . and create a research record of the people, places, events and objects within it, as well as their own personal interactions and responses." By using the classroom as laboratory, teachers can, for example, learn whether interdisciplinary teaching is as effective with their remedial students as with their high achievers.

Research conducted by teachers differs from academic research (Black). First, academic researchers strive for objectivity, keeping the subjects of their study at arm's length. Teachers, in contrast, maintain a close relationship with the objects of their study. Academics try to design and control events under study while teachers observe activities as they occur in the real world, namely their classes. Finally, traditional researchers seek to globalize results while teachers know that their findings apply only to the students in their classes.

Such small-scale studies are often termed *action research*, because the teacher-researcher takes action based on the results of his or her findings. The research may be formal or informal, short- or long-term. But it is based on the understanding that the results are collected from a set of students and the action is applied to those same students (Calhoun, Molly Watt and Daniel Watt 1991).

How Can Data Be Used Effectively?

In any organization, those who possess information typically exercise a degree of power or control over those who don't. How information is to be used will affect how data-collection initiatives are perceived and then implemented.

Data can be used to judge people's performance and take punitive action against underachievers, or it can be used to diagnose problems and determine the efficacy of solutions.

Principals' "willingness to provide opportunities for information acquisition. . . may be tempered by their competitive notions of power which only impede the empowerment of teachers" (Peggy Kirby and Ira Bogotch 1989).

The concept of continuous improvement should be stressed. "Each data-collection cycle and its results should not be thought of as an activity with a grade. . . it should be thought of as information on the progress being made toward attaining the collective goal and to assist all members of the organization as they make decisions for current and future action, " states Calhoun.

Choosing a specific area of focus is also crucial. Through consultation with other staff members, whether formally or informally, the researcher needs to select a well-defined set of objectives. The data-collection cycle and subsequent action steps should be designed to address these needs. When goals of the improvement effort are clearly defined, teachers, staff, and the community will be more likely to understand and support the initiative.

What Steps Can Schools Take To Improve Their Use of Data?

Most researchers suggest that a logical first step in using data is to begin making better use of existing data. A systematic analysis of data that are already being collected can reveal previously unseen patterns and opportunities for improvement. More inventive data sources require greater efforts to collect and interpret them.

Outside resources can support efforts to collect and analyze data effectively. For example, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory administers a variety of data-driven school-improvement programs that have been proven effective (Robert Blum, Kim Yap, and Jocelyn Butler 1992). One recent innovation is their "data in a day" program, wherein advisors, staff, and student volunteers select an area of focus in the morning, collect data, and present findings later the same day. The immediacy of the results and the involvement of a range of individuals often provide tangible benefits to everyone involved, especially the students.

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QUESTIONS FOR SELF STUDY

DO WE KEEP STUDENTS "AT THE CENTER?"

1. What is your school's vision for student learning and how has this vision impacted your school improvement work?
2. What kinds of experiences have provided the most powerful learning experiences for students? What made these learning activities work so well for your students?
3. What has your school done to learn about specific student needs? Do you have any data that provides diagnostic information about student needs? How has the school changed its program to adapt to the student needs that were identified?
4. How does your school know the programs that you use are the best ones for your students? What has been used or could be used to assess program effectiveness?
5. What does your school do to ensure that its improvement work is implemented and then sustained? Has the leadership of this improvement work been shared? Who on the staff takes responsibility to see that the changes get made? Are school staff able to share responsibility?
6. What kind of evidence does your school have to show that your improvement work is focused on improving student achievement?

Students at the Center:
A National Teleconference on School Reform

Selected Readings About Professional Learning Communities Within Schools

a) "Professional Learning Communities: What Are They and Why Are They Important?" by Shirley Hord, *Issues about Change*: Volume, 6 #1, Newsletter from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin. Texas.
b) "Constructing Communities of Cooperation" by Anne Lockwood, *New Leaders for Urban Schools*, Newsletter from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, Oak Brook, IL. Volume 1, 1995.
c) *Blue Ribbon Panel Working Paper: Excellence in Professional Development and Professional Community* by Judith Warren Little. **(EXCERPTS)**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Volume 6, Number 1 1997

Issues . . . about Change

Professional Learning Communities: What Are They and Why Are They Important?

In education circles, the term *learning community* has become commonplace. It is being used to mean any number of things, such as extending classroom practice into the community; bringing community personnel into the school to enhance the curriculum and learning tasks for students; or engaging students, teachers, and administrators simultaneously in learning — to suggest just a few.

This paper focuses on what Astuto and colleagues (1993) label the *professional community of learners*, in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals so that students benefit. This arrangement has also been termed *communities of continuous inquiry and improvement.*

As an organizational arrangement, the professional learning community is seen as a powerful staff development approach and a potent strategy for school change and improvement. Thus, persons at all levels of the educational system concerned about school improvement — state department personnel, intermediate service agency staff, district and campus administrators, teacher leaders, key parents and local school community members — should find this paper of interest.

This paper represents an abbreviation of Hord's review of the literature (1997), which explored the concept and operationalization of professional learning communities and their outcomes for staff and students.

THE BEGINNINGS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

During the eighties, Rosenholtz (1989) brought teachers' workplace factors into the discussion of teaching quality, maintaining that teachers who felt *supported* in their own ongoing learning and classroom practice were more committed and effective than those who did not receive such confirmation. Support by means of teacher networks, cooperation among colleagues, and expanded professional roles increased teacher efficacy in meeting students' needs. Further, Rosenholtz found that teachers with a high sense of their own efficacy were more likely to adopt new classroom behaviors and also more likely to stay in the profession.

McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) confirmed Rosenholtz's findings, suggesting that when teachers had opportunities for collaborative inquiry and the learning related to it, they were able to develop and share a body of wisdom gleaned from their experience. Adding to the discussion, Darling-Hammond (1996) cited shared decision making as a factor in curriculum reform and the transformation of teaching roles in some schools. In such schools, structured time is provided for teachers to work together in planning instruction, observing each other's classrooms, and sharing feedback. These and other attributes characterize professional learning communities.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street, Austin, Texas 78701 (512) 476-6861

ATTRIBUTES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The literature on professional learning communities repeatedly gives attention to five attributes of such organizational arrangements: supportive and shared leadership, collective creativity, shared values and vision, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice. Each of these is discussed briefly.

Supportive and Shared Leadership

The school change and educational leadership literatures clearly recognize the role and influence of the campus administrator (principal, and sometimes assistant principal) on whether change will occur in the school. It seems clear that transforming a school organization into a learning community can be done only with the sanction of the leaders and the active nurturing of the entire staff's development as a community. Thus, a look at the principal of a school whose staff is a professional learning community seems a good starting point for describing what these learning communities look like and how the principal "accepts a collegial relationship with teachers" (D. Rainey, personal communication, March 13, 1997) to share leadership, power, and decision making.

Lucianne Carmichael, the first resident principal of the Harvard University Principal Center and a principal who nurtured a professional community of learners in her own school, discusses the position of authority and power typically held by principals, in which the staff views them as all-wise and all-competent (1982). Principals have internalized this "omnicompetence," Carmichael asserts. Others in the school reinforce it, making it difficult for principals to admit that they themselves can benefit from professional development opportunities, or to recognize the dynamic potential of staff contributions to decision making. Furthermore, when the principal's position is so thoroughly dominant, it is difficult for staff to propose divergent views or ideas about the school's effectiveness.

Carmichael proposes that the notion of principals' omnicompetence be "ditched" in favor of their participation in their own professional development. Kleine-Kracht (1993) concurs and suggests that administrators, along with teachers, must be learners too, "questioning, investigating, and seeking solutions" (p. 393) for school improvement. The traditional pattern that "teachers teach, students learn, and administrators manage is completely altered . . . [There is] no longer a hierarchy of who knows more than someone else, but rather the need for everyone to contribute" (p. 393).

This new relationship forged between administrators and teachers leads to shared and collegial leadership in the school, where all grow professionally and learn to view themselves (to use an athletic metaphor) as "all playing on the same team and working toward the same goal: a better school" (Hoerr, 1996, p. 381).

Louis and Kruse (1995) identify the supportive leadership of principals as one of the necessary human resources for restructuring staff into school-based professional communities. The authors refer to these principals as "post-heroic leaders who do not view themselves as the architects of school effectiveness" (p. 234). Prestine (1993) also defines characteristics of principals in schools that undertake school restructuring: a willingness to share authority, the capacity to facilitate the work of staff, and the ability to participate without dominating.

Sergiovanni explains that "the sources of authority for leadership are embedded in shared ideas" (1994b, p. 214), not in the power of position. Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, and Snyder (1996) assert that it is also important that the principal believe that teachers have the capacity to respond to the needs of students, that this belief "provides moral strength for principals to meet difficult political and educational challenges along the way" (p. 19). Senge (quoted by O'Neil, 1995) adds that the principal's job is to create an environment in which the staff can learn continuously; "[t]hen in turn, . . . the job of the superintendent is to find principals and support [such] principals" (p. 21) who create this environment.

An additional dimension, then, is a chief executive of the school district who supports and encourages continuous learning of its professionals. This observation suggests that no longer can leaders be thought of as top-down agents of change or seen as the visionaries of the corporation; instead leaders must be regarded as democratic teachers.

Collective Creativity

In 1990, Peter Senge's book *The Fifth Discipline* arrived in bookstores and began popping up in the boardrooms of corporate America. Over the next year or so, the book and its description of *learning organizations*, which might serve to increase organizational capacity and creativity, moved into the educational environment. The idea of a learning organization "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3) caught the attention of educators who were struggling to plan and implement reform in the nation's schools. As Senge's paradigm shift was explored by educators and shared in educational journals, the label became *learning communities*.

In schools, the learning community is demonstrated by people from multiple constituencies, at all levels, collaboratively and continually working together (Louis & Kruse, 1995). Such collaborative work is grounded in what Newmann (reported by Brandt, 1995) and Louis and Kruse label reflective dialogue, in which staff conduct conversations about students and teaching and learning, identifying related issues and problems. Griffin (cited by Sergiovanni, 1994a, p. 154) refers to these activities as *inquiry*, and

> believes that as principals and teachers inquire together they create community. Inquiry helps them to overcome chasms caused by various specializations of grade level and subject matter. Inquiry forces debate among teachers about what is important. Inquiry promotes understanding and appreciation for the work of others. . . . And inquiry helps principals and teachers create the ties that bond them together as a special group and that bind them to a shared set of ideas. Inquiry, in other words, helps principals and teachers become a community of learners.

Participants in such conversations learn to apply new ideas and information to problem solving and therefore are able to create new conditions for students. Key tools in this process are shared values and vision; supportive physical, temporal, and social conditions; and a shared personal practice. We will look at each of these in turn.

Shared Values and Vision

"Vision is a trite term these days, and at various times it refers to mission, purpose, goals, objectives, or a sheet of paper posted near the principal's office" (Isaacson & Bamburg, 1992, p. 42). Sharing vision is not just agreeing with a good idea; it is a particular mental image of what is important to an individual and to an organization. Staff are encouraged not only to be involved in the process of developing a shared vision but to use that vision as a guidepost in making decisions about teaching and learning in the school (ibid.).

A core characteristic of the vision is an undeviating focus on student learning, maintains Louis and Kruse (1995), in which each student's potential achievement is carefully considered. These shared values and vision lead to binding norms of behavior that the staff supports.

In such a community, the individual staff member is responsible for his/her actions, but the common good is placed on a par with personal ambition. The relationships between individuals are described as caring. Such caring is supported by open communication, made possible by trust (Fawcett, 1996).

Supportive Condition

Several kinds of factors determine *when, where,* and *how* the staff can regularly come together as a unit to do the learning, decision making, problem solving, and creative work that characterize a professional learning community. In order for learning communities to function productively, the physical or structural conditions and the human qualities and capacities of the people involved must be optimal (Boyd, 1992; Louis & Kruse, 1995).

Physical conditions. Louis and Kruse identify the following physical factors that support learning communities: time to meet and talk, small school size and physical proximity of the staff to one another, interdependent teaching roles, well-developed communication structures, school autonomy, and teacher empowerment. An additional factor is the staff's input in selecting teachers and administrators for the school, and even encouraging staff who are not in tune with the program to find work elsewhere.

Boyd presents a similar list of physical factors that result in an environment conducive to school change and improvement: the availability of resources; schedules and structures that reduce isolation; policies that encourage greater autonomy, foster collaboration, enhance effective communication, and provide for staff development. Time is clearly a resource: "Time, or more properly lack of it, is one of the most difficult problems faced by schools and districts." (Watts & Castle, 1993, p. 306). Time is a significant issue for faculties who wish to work together collegially, and it has been cited as both a barrier (when it is not available) and a supportive factor (when it is available) by staffs engaging in school improvement.

People capacities. One of the first characteristics cited by Louis and Kruse (1995) of individuals in a productive learning community is a willingness to accept feedback and to work toward improvement. In addition, the following qualities are needed: respect and trust among colleagues at the school and district level, possession of an appropriate cognitive and skill base that enables effective teaching and learning, supportive leadership from administrators and others in key roles, and relatively intensive socialization processes.

Note the strong parallel with the people or human factors identified by Boyd (1992): positive teacher attitudes toward schooling, students, and change; students' heightened interest and engagement with learning (which could be construed as both an outcome and an input, it seems); norms of continuous critical inquiry and continuous improvement; a widely shared vision or sense of purpose; a norm of involvement in decision making; collegial relationships among teachers; positive, caring student-teacher-administrator relationships; a sense of community in the school; and two factors beyond the school staff — supportive community attitudes and parents and community members as partners and allies.

Boyd (1992) points out that the physical and people factors are highly interactive, many of them influencing the others. Boyd and Hord (1994) clustered the factors into four overarching functions that help build a context conducive to change and improvement: reducing staff isolation, increasing staff capacity, providing a caring and productive environment, and improving the quality of the school's programs for students.

Shared Personal Practice

Review of a teacher's behavior by colleagues is the norm in the professional learning community (Louis & Kruse, 1995). This practice is not evaluative but is part of the "peers helping peers" process. Such review is conducted regularly by teachers, who visit each other's classrooms to observe, script notes, and discuss their observations with the visited peer.

The process is based on the desire for individual and community improvement and is enabled by the mutual respect and trustworthiness of staff members.

Wignall (1992) describes a high school in which teachers share their practice and enjoy a high level of collaboration in their daily work life. Mutual respect and understanding are the fundamental requirements for this kind of workplace culture. Teachers find help, support, and trust as a result of developing warm relationships with each other. "Teachers tolerate (even encourage) debate, discussion and disagreement. They are comfortable sharing both their successes and their failures. They praise and recognize one another's triumphs, and offer empathy and support for each other's troubles" (p. 18). One of the conditions that supports such a culture is the involvement of the teachers in interviewing, selecting, and hiring new teachers. They feel a commitment to their selections and to ensuring the effectiveness of the entire staff.

One goal of reform is to provide appropriate learning environments for students. Teachers, too, need "an environment that values and supports hard work, the acceptance of challenging tasks, risk taking, and the promotion of growth" (Midgley & Wood, 1993, p. 252). Sharing their personal practice contributes to creating such a setting.

Summary of Attributes

Reports in the literature are quite clear about what successful professional learning communities look like and act like. The requirements necessary for such organizational arrangements include:

- the collegial and facilitative participation of the principal, who shares leadership — and thus, power and authority — through inviting staff input in decision making
- a shared vision that is developed from staff's unswerving commitment to students' learning and that is consistently articulated and referenced for the staff's work
- collective learning among staff and application of that learning to solutions that address students' needs
- the visitation and review of each teacher's classroom behavior by peers as a feedback and assistance activity to support individual and community improvement and
- physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation

OUTCOMES OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

What difference does it make if staff are communally organized? What results, if any, might be gained from this kind of arrangement? An abbreviated report of staff and student outcomes in schools where staff are engaged together in professional learning communities follows. This report comes from the summary of results included in the literature review noted above (Hord, 1997, p. 27).

For staff, the following results have been observed:

- reduction of isolation of teachers
- increased commitment to the mission and goals of the school and increased vigor in working to strengthen the mission
- shared responsibility for the total development of students and collective responsibility for students' success
- powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice and that creates new knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learners
- increased meaning and understanding of the content that teachers teach and the roles they play in helping all students achieve expectations
- higher likelihood that teachers will be well informed, professionally renewed, and inspired to inspire students
- more satisfaction, higher morale, and lower rates of absenteeism

- significant advances in adapting teaching to the students, accomplished more quickly than in traditional schools
- commitment to making significant and lasting changes and
- higher likelihood of undertaking fundamental systemic change (p. 27).

For students, the results include:

- decreased dropout rate and fewer classes "skipped"
- lower rates of absenteeism
- increased learning that is distributed more equitably in the smaller high schools
- greater academic gains in math, science, history, and reading than intraditional schools and
- smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds (p. 28).

For more information about these important professional learning community outcomes, please refer to the literature review (Hord, 1997).

IN CONCLUSION

If strong results such as the above are linked to teachers and administrators working in professional learning communities, how might the frequency of such communities in schools be increased? A paradigm shift is needed both by the public and by teachers themselves, about what the role of teacher entails. Many in the public and in the profession believe that the only legitimate use of teachers' time is standing in front of the class, working directly with students. In studies comparing how teachers around the globe spend their time, it is clear that in countries such as Japan, teachers teach fewer classes and use a greater portion of their time to plan, confer with colleagues, work with students individually, visit other classrooms, and engage in other professional development activities (Darling-Hammond, 1994, 1996). Bringing about changes in perspective that will enable the public and the profession to understand and value teachers' professional development will require focused and concerted effort. As Lucianne Carmichael has said, "Teachers are the first learners." Through their participation in a professional learning community, teachers become more effective, and student outcomes increase — a goal upon which we can all agree.

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Constructing Communities of Cooperation

by Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood

Currently we hear much talk of "community" in schools — a term that, like "restructuring," may mean quite different things to different people. Although the context and meaning of community may vary widely — from creating a sense of shared experiences for principals and teachers to creating a supportive climate for students to encouraging students to give something back to the outside community — educators and researchers see community, in general, as a positive factor that should be encouraged in schools.

Understandably, when viewed in this vague and imprecise manner, some educators, however, may demur; they may view "community" as "soft" — a "warm and fuzzy" concept that is intangible, somehow emotional, and therefore suspect. But when framed specifically in terms of how schools are organized to foster teacher engagement and student achievement, many researchers (Barth, personal communication, November 14, 1994; Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Lee & Smith, 1994; Louis, 1994; Newmann, 1994; Peterson, 1994) view community in schools as a key and particularly encouraging part of the current wave of restructuring.

Community: Implications for School Leaders

What precisely do we mean when we talk about "community" in U.S. schools, and what does it mean when a school is communally and collaboratively organized? Newmann (1994) defines community as "school staff members taking collective responsibility for achieving a shared educational purpose, and collaborating with one another to achieve that purpose" (p. 1).

For school leaders, what are the implications of collective responsibility and collaboration? Do the twin concepts, "community" and "collaboration," mean the school principal no longer exerts strong leadership or holds authority?

Far from it. In fact, new concepts of schools as carefully structured communities of learners actually demand *more* from principals: new skills, different ways of working collaboratively with staff to nudge, coax, negotiate, and facilitate their engagement and investment in their work. In communally organized schools, the role of principals shifts from the traditional one of a CEO issuing edicts to a more subtle — and more difficult — role in which the principal must be able to work productively with diverse teams of staff, parents, students, and other stakeholders (Peterson, 1994).

In this publication, we will examine why and in what ways the overall concept of communally organized schools holds promise for increasing teacher engagement and, hence, boosting student achievement. Second, we will scrutinize what leadership means within a communally organized school. Specifically, how does it change? Third, we will look at the actions taken by engaged teachers in communally organized schools. Fourth, we will present the evidence that suggests that a communally organized school leads to greater teacher engagement and heightened student achievement.

Finally, we will illustrate the changing roles of leaders in communally organized schools through a description of City Park Secondary School — a communally organized, very successful urban school drawn from the research of Karen

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Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood, an education writer and analyst, is an Honorary Fellow in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin — Madison. She is the recipient of several honors, including the American Educational Research Association's Interpretive Scholarship Award, given for outstanding contributions relating research to practice.

Seashore Louis — and tell the stories of The Open Charter School (Los Angeles, California) and Florin High School (Sacramento County, California). While City Park Secondary School (a pseudonym for a large urban high school) is far along the road to high teacher engagement, demanding curricula for all students, and boosted student achievement — and thus can be considered an exemplar of a communally organized school — its staff would undoubtedly consider it a work in progress. The other two schools amply illustrate the successes and ongoing challenges of schools restructuring for community and engagement, and each has a different experience to relate.

Community vs. Bureaucracy

When a school is communally organized, how does it depart from conventional practice? Lee and Smith (1994, pp. 1-2) draw a distinction between schools organized communally and schools organized bureaucratically. They describe bureaucratically organized schools as typically large, headed by a principal who functions as a manager, and comprehensive — offering an array of specialties and courses from which students choose. Lieberman, Falk, and Alexander (1995) concur, maintaining that the principal in such schools is assumed to be the fount of pedagogical knowledge and the repository of power and control.

The negative aspects of bureaucratically organized schools, they contend, include increased stratification of students into high and low tracks; a lack of sustained time spent together on the part of teachers and students; and different and conflicting goals held by people in the school due to its size, complexity, and lack of agreement on a common mission.

In contrast, Lee and Smith describe communally organized schools as typically smaller, where complicated rules and procedures are less necessary, and where staff agree on the "organizational purpose" of the school (p. 2). Teachers' roles shift to collaborative ones, where they frequently work in teams on interdisciplinary curricula, which also serves to break down barriers between content areas. Rather than separating students by interests and abilities, diverse students are grouped together, and that is seen as a school strength, not a disabling and punishing sanction visited upon staff.

Characteristics of Schools With High Teacher Engagement

Louis (1994), in her discussion of teacher engagement in urban schools, carefully defines teacher engagement, pointing out the additional struggles educators in urban schools confront, which include dwindling or severely insufficient resources, highly diverse student populations, and the demands of poverty and violence. Next, she pinpoints characteristics of school culture, school organization, teacher engagement, and school leadership that make successful communally organized schools stand apart.

Teacher engagement, she explains, falls into four types: two are "affective and focus on human relationships within the school," and two others are "instrumental and focus on the goals of teaching and learning" (p. 7). The four types include:

- ✓ Engagement with the school as a social unit
- ✓ Engagement with students as unique whole individuals rather than as 'empty vessels to be filled
- ✓ Engagement with academic achievement
- ✓ Engagement with a body of knowledge (p. 8)

The cultures of the schools where teacher engagement is high, she says, include:

- ✓ A strong sense of being in a school with a mission
- ✓ An emphasis on closeness among staff members, an emphasis on respect and caring for students
- ✓ A demand for active problem-solving among teachers
- ✓ Peer pressure among teachers to work (pp. 14-19)

These school culture characteristics don't just happen, however — they are encouraged by a host of organizational factors that include creating structures to promote teacher decision-making, teacher collaboration, teacher professional development, and curriculum improvement (pp. 19-23).

In schools where these characteristics of school culture and organization are present, the principal's role changes from that of a traditional, top-down leader to a collaborative, knowledgeable, and entrepreneurial partner with staff, parents, and the broader outside community. Louis describes specific actions principals take to promote high teacher and student engagement, including:

- ✓ Buffering teachers from external distractions and demands
- ✓ Attending to daily routines (including an open-door policy when possible, high informal visibility within the

school, interacting informally with students and staff)

- ✓ Delegating and empowering staff as well as forthrightly confronting disengaged teachers
- ✓ Providing leadership on values held communally (pp. 24-26)

Overcoming the "Myths of Leadership"

What facilitates the type of leadership demanded in a collaborative and communal school, the leadership that helps teachers invest and engage in their work with a strong focus on student achievement? Peterson (1994, p. 18) argues that the five "myths of leadership" identified by Bennis and Nanus (1985) must be overcome. The myths include:

- ✓ Leadership is a rare skill
- ✓ Leaders are born, not made
- ✓ Leaders are charismatic
- ✓ Leadership exists only at the top
- ✓ The leader controls, prods, directs, and manipulates

In fact, Peterson argues, the type of leader needed in a communally organized school is one who sees the leadership potential in teachers and parents, who believes that staff development facilitates leadership, and who is able to motivate (not manipulate) others. In communally organized schools, he believes, leaders can be found in every position throughout the school and, in fact, must be in place for the school to succeed. Finally, control is something the collaboratively oriented leader has relinquished in favor of a more egalitarian ideal that believes in others' abilities to problem-solve (p. 19).

Although the principals of City Park, The Open Charter School, and Florin High School differ in their administrative styles, they all demonstrate a collaborative, yet decisive, leadership style that has provided impetus for schoolwide teacher engagement, interdisciplinary curriculum planning, and high commitment to student achievement. In fact, the principals in the three schools we feature probably shunned a top-down leadership style from the outset of their administrative careers.

These principals vary in their personal characteristics and temperaments, but they share a healthy respect for their staffs, the belief that teachers can and should problem-solve, the insistence that teachers be actively engaged in planning curriculum collaboratively (as interdisciplinary and thematic as possible), a commitment to consensus-building in their schools around a common mission and shared goals, and the belief that they should model professional development for staff.

The Roles of Principals and Teachers in Communally Organized Schools

Principals and teachers in communally organized schools share certain characteristics, even though their roles differ. For instance, in the three schools we feature, teachers and principals see themselves as active, hungry learners. They work hard to empower students to move from their familiar roles as passive recipients of information to active participants in the act of learning.

Principals encourage teachers to plan curriculum collaboratively — with input from a variety of sources, including parents and administrators — and where possible, urge staff to participate in worthwhile professional development experiences. In many bureaucratically organized schools, staff development initiatives stop once the teacher returns to the classroom, uncertain or unable to implement the ideas she or he has gleaned. The teacher is not helped by a rigid departmental structure that discour-

In communally organized schools, leaders can be found in every position throughout the school and, in fact, must be in place for the school to succeed.

Peer pressure in communally organized schools can nudge up the performance of disengaged teachers– or squeeze out those who cannot perform at the school's expectations.

ages the sharing of ideas. In communally organized schools, principals frequently participate side by side in the same professional development experiences with their teachers and collaboratively plan implementation of new ideas and concepts when they return to their schools. Staff in communally organized schools are open to ideas from the outside world and try to base their curricular decisions on a solid research base, but do not rely heavily on outside "experts."

As one principal says:

> *Staff development has to happen from within. We can't rely on gurus from the outside because once those gurus leave, so do their ideas.*

Principals work to involve teachers in a collaborative governance structure — a school norm, for instance, makes it important to participate on at least one committee. In communally organized schools, the committees have significant decision-making authority and are not hollow gestures toward involving teachers and parents.

Principals and teachers also share the characteristics of risk-takers and educational entrepreneurs — willing to try something new to see how well it works and willing to be vulnerable enough to ask for help. They possess a high degree of trust in their colleagues; in revealing areas in which they need help, they will not be perceived as weak. They are also willing to take on considerable outreach work with parents and the outside community, viewing it not as an empty effort at public relations, but integral to the school's mission and goals.

Both principals and teachers in our three schools share respect for their students — respect that they find is returned. As one teacher says:

> *"I don't think educators treat children very honestly very often . . . when you have an authentic situation in the classroom where you ask them honestly and you intend to listen, you get a whole different kind of reaction. As educators, we have to tap into that and quit the authoritarian separation of 'I know and you don't know.' The more honest questioning we can do the better results we are going to get."*

In communally organized and oriented schools, lines of demarcation — between those who are supposedly "finished" as learners and those who are just starting out — are not clearly drawn; rather, *all* are learners and share that status.

How Teachers' Roles Change

What specific actions do engaged teachers take in communally organized schools that differ from traditional practice? First, teachers relinquish often long-held and comfortable roles as content authorities and begin the often uncomfortable process of questioning the effectiveness of their practice. This is especially difficult in secondary schools due to their history (Urban, 1982) and departmental, content-focused structure.

Engaged teachers also share their successes and problems with their peers, which means they become vulnerable to external scrutiny and feedback — which illustrates a highly professional ethos. Peer pressure in communally organized schools can nudge up the performance of disengaged teachers — or squeeze out those who cannot perform at the school's expectations.

The Evidence: Is Community in Schools Effective?

Do communally organized schools "work"? The results of a study conducted by Lee and Smith (1994) strongly indicate they do. Using data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) in a study undertaken for the

National Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, the authors asked if students learned more in schools organized communally. They then hypothesized that shifts from bureaucratically organized schools to communally organized schools would affect student engagement positively, that achievement gains would be distributed more evenly among students with differing socioeconomic backgrounds, and that students would learn more in smaller schools.

The authors identified traditional, moderate, and restructuring practices for their study. The restructuring practices included the following:

- ✓ Students keep same homeroom throughout high school
- ✓ Emphasis on staff solving school problems
- ✓ Parents volunteer in the school
- ✓ Interdisciplinary teaching teams are present
- ✓ The curriculum includes independent study and interdisciplinary English/social studies
- ✓ Mixed-ability classes in math/science
- ✓ Cooperative learning focus
- ✓ Student evaluation of teachers important
- ✓ Independent study in math/science
- ✓ School-within-a-school
- ✓ Teacher teams have common planning time
- ✓ Flexible time for classes (p. 3)

In their findings, Lee and Smith concluded that student achievement gains in the first two years of high school were "significantly higher" in the restructuring schools, with the achievement gap between lower socioeconomic status and higher socioeconomic status narrowed (pp. 3, 5). They also noted that schools that tried to take on too many activities that the authors defined as "restructuring reforms" — initiatives dramatically different from their current practice — were not as successful. And apart from the restructuring reforms they identified for their study, they found that school size is critical to both student achievement gains and an equitable distribution of those gains across socioeconomic status.

But the authors caution that simply implementing a number of items from their list of restructuring practices does not guarantee that student achievement will rise or that teacher engagement will increase. The change process, they warn, is too complicated for these restructuring practices to serve as a simplistic list or blueprint for schools to follow.

But the authors caution that simply implementing a number of items from their list of restructuring practices does not guarantee that student achievement will rise or that teacher engagement will increase.

Membership in a communally organized school — a true community of learners — means a considerable investment of self. The principals and teachers in our three schools are neither saints nor martyrs. Rather, they are real human beings often oppressed by the larger-than-life problems they face daily that are outside their control to affect directly, such as homeless students, high mobility, and severe and persistent poverty. An additional challenge — which can be an asset — is how to deal effectively with many different cultures and languages under one school roof. As they tell us, first forming a community of learners and then inhabiting it with advanced problem-solving abilities and thoughtfulness has meant they think differently about their roles as educators and about the students and families that they serve.

Selected bibliography may be found under flap

City Park Secondary School: Community, Collaboration, Commitment

The Setting

City Park Secondary School is a small, innovative secondary school located in an impoverished section of a major northeastern city. It sits in the shadow of a public housing project where poverty, crime, drugs, and violence touch community members' lives daily. The school shares a large 1950s-era building with two other small schools. The district allows high school parents and students to choose which school students will attend. Although the immediate neighborhood is largely Hispanic, the school aims for a diverse enrollment and has largely succeeded: Its student body is approximately 45 percent black, 35 percent Hispanic, and 20 percent white. Students show a broad range of academic ability.

The Philosophy

City Park has roots in the progressive education tradition. It subscribes to the following principles: minimization of bureaucracy; a humanistic, open environment characterized by equal respect for staff and students (students do not need passes to go to the bathroom, and students and staff both use their first name); no tracking; a core curriculum planned and developed by teams of teachers; significant team planning time; instructional and learning strategies oriented around "essential questions" and inquiry; parent involvement; and an overall sense of family.

City Park's principal has a philosophy of collaboration that ties teacher engagement to student engagement:

> *You must remove teachers from isolation and make learning exciting. To make learning exciting for students, you must make learning exciting for teachers, because when learning is exciting for both teachers and students, kids can't get lost.*

The Structure

The school enrolls around 600 students in three divisions (7-8, 9-10, and 11-12). These are further divided into houses with about 80 students each. There are no traditional departments. Instead, each division has a Math-Science Team and a Humanities Team, each consisting of about five teachers. Teams meet weekly for two hours to develop and coordinate curriculum, share ideas, and discuss what has and has not worked.

Scheduling is nontraditional, with students and teachers meeting for two-hour blocks. Because of the division structure, students stay with the same teachers for two years. They also have the same advisor throughout their high school years. A daily one-hour advisory period focuses on guidance for academic and personal growth, and reinforces the "family" atmosphere of the school.

The entire school structure of City Park is seen by teachers as designed for empowerment:

> *We are a decision-making school. We work as a whole school, we work. . . within our team and. . . within our classrooms where even kids are allowed to make some decisions about how things are to be done.*

City Park's schedule makes time for a weekly two-hour meeting in which teams develop curricula, teaching strategies, and student assignments. The schedule reflects the value the school places on teachers' engagement with the academic program:

> *In my other school, what I was good at, I stayed good at. What I wasn't good at, I never improved. . . I really could have been in the building all by myself. There were never times when you could get together and discuss issues with other teachers.*

Schoolwide Engagement in Action

CITY PARK'S TEACHERS:

- Trust one another:

> *When I came here . . . I had to learn a lot. I got a tremendous amount of help. [The principal] helped me; [another teacher] with 14 years of experience became my best friend here . . . I used to meet him every morning to talk about what we were going to do and how we were going to do it . . . and he would come observe my classes.*

- Care about students:

  If you are teaching the kids, you see where each kid is and what their next step is. You have to perceive all of the differences; . . . you have to handle the resistance so that they may make steps for themselves . . .That is an engaging process.

- Unearth and solve problems:

  The assumption is that the kids are basically trying to do the best that they can, and that might not be so great at a given point in time, and you try to get everybody together and acknowledge that there's a problem. Rather than trying to blame someone, you try to deal with the problem, what are the different factors, and what can we do to change the situation. And that's the way problems are dealt with, even academically.

- Collaborate with demanding colleagues to stimulate high-quality work
- Participate in schoolwide retreats but ad hoc or semi-planned professional development opportunities are as important as days officially dedicated to staff development
- Develop curricula, instructional units, lesson plans, and instructional designs in teams

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Drawn from *Teacher Engagement and Real Reform in Urban Schools* (1994), by Karen Seashore Louis, published by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, edited by Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood.

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The [illegible] teacher tells. The good teacher
The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teach

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The Stories of Two Communally Restructuring Schools

by Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood

The Open Charter School, Los Angeles, California

How does the principal — the primary school leader — work to engage teachers collaboratively in their work? How do teachers press one another into a communal, inspiring "best effort"? What structural factors contribute to high teacher engagement and a schoolwide focus on academic achievement? We pursued these questions with staff at two schools: The Open Charter School in Los Angeles, California, and Florin High School in the Elk Grove district of Sacramento County, California.

The Open Charter School enjoys some enviable freedoms from district regulations — but they have been brought about by entrepreneurial, exhaustive work by its principal and teachers. Founded 15 years ago by parents as an alternative to court-ordered, mandatory busing, The Open Charter School is a magnet school that today serves 384 students, K-5, and recently was granted charter status. Its commitment to diversity is seen in its student population: 30 percent Caucasian, 20 percent Hispanic, 20 percent African American, 20 percent Asian, and approximately 2 percent other ethnicities, including Native American. Students apply for admission and are selected by lottery; to ensure diversity of ethnicity, race, and socioeconomic status, points are given for the location of their neighborhood school, their ethnicity, and the ethnic needs of the district.

One of the first things an observer notices about The Open Charter School is its unusual governance structure: a governing board makes all policy decisions at the school and is comprised of the principal, 6 of the school's 12 teachers who rotate their participation, and elected parent representatives from each demographic area that sends students to the school. The principal, Grace Arnold, also serves on a steering committee, which forms the middle level of governance, along with two teacher representatives and the governing board president and vice-president. Finally, a number of committees are devoted to curriculum, technology, budget, and development — with parent representatives who do not find it unusual to chair a committee.

Arnold reveals a great deal about how she views teachers and the school's academic mission when she discusses her leadership philosophy. "I see myself as the great connector," she says, "connecting staff to educational research, to parents, to the business community, to the community at large, to the state legislature." Her entrepreneurial style is a must for The Open Charter School to stay afloat, since it is partially funded by the district and also actively fundraises and competes for private and federal grants to support its programs.

Clearly, Arnold and The Open Charter School's staff enjoy a collaborative relationship, with teachers taking on leadership roles throughout the school — and status issues either blurred or nonexistent.

To what extent is teacher participation on committees welcomed, and not regarded as yet another obligation in a busy teaching day? Arnold says, "Teachers choose the committees in which they want to participate. Having been a principal in other schools, I know that usually when you have committees no one wants to participate—it is perfunctory. Either the committee never meets, or nothing ever happens."

She adds emphatically: "But not here."

Committees respond to the school's needs and are not static, Arnold reports. To illustrate what she terms "the birth of a committee," she points to current staff and parent discussion about how best to educate those students identified as gifted and talented — discussion that she believes should be funneled into a committee to study the topic. "I will set a date for the first meeting of a committee on education for the gifted, and we will appoint a chairperson on the spot from the people who come," she explains. "All committees are always open to anybody — and people come."

Another integral part of the school's structure can be seen in staff commitment to cross-age, team-taught grouping, according to Delores Patton, a third/fourth grade teacher. "We teach in clusters of two teachers and 64 children, with an overlap of K/1, 2/3, 3/4, 4/5, and 4/5/6," she explains. Just as teachers decide the committees in which they want to participate, they select their team partners on a voluntary basis.

Authentic Curricula and Student Engagement

The focus of The Open Charter School is emphatically on student learning — with teacher learning paramount as well. The clusters are interdisciplinary and constructed in a way that demands a great deal from teachers as well as students. The innovative unit on cities that Patton and her team partner, Denise Cole, teach for grades three and four is an example of the imagination and careful planning that teachers bring to their classrooms.

The yearlong unit is based on students' "wish" for a different city where they would like to live in the future. "We walk the neighborhood, look at structures, and then look at a land model we have in the classroom, which is a 14 by 8 foot styrofoam model," Patton says. "Each child gets a piece of the model, like a piece of a puzzle, which fits into a neighborhood area."

Students are divided into teams for each neighborhood, and collaboratively they design what they would like to have in their neighborhood area, which challenges their mathematical skills. "We do a lot with scale, because they have to figure out that half an inch equals six feet," Patton explains.

Students also must provide the city services that would be essential to keep a city functioning. Within their neighborhood teams they make a map of what they want to plan and they use items that they find to build the city, design it, paint it, and imagine what it would be like to live in it."

Each neighborhood team is divided into eight different commissions, with positions on each commission for every child. Each commission does an in-depth study of an aspect of a city, such as transportation, history, arts, or environment — and the rigors of commission work demand that students become "expert" in their topic, she says, which requires a substantial amount of reading. "They design the transportation for the city," Patton says, "and the environmental commission plans parks and recreational facilities for the city. The work the teams and commissions do is like putting together a quilt."

Obviously, Patton believes the benefits of this unit are substantial. "Learning this way empowers kids, because they are designing something that is similar to something they will live in when they are adults. They know instantly it is really an authentic curriculum."

Does she experience any difficulties with such a complicated and lengthy unit — which could become unwieldy or impractical? "No," she responds. "One of the great things about the city project is that it provides equal access for all children to learn. It doesn't matter if you can read or whether you are super in math — everyone in the cluster lives in a city."

She tells a poignant story to illustrate her point. "I have one little girl who is struggling with reading," she continues, "and she lived in an inner-city neighborhood that wasn't well-tended. We were talking about streets and repairing streets, and she looked up and said, 'They don't repair my street very often; there are big holes in my street.'"

Patton reports that a surprisingly sophisticated political discussion of inequity evolved spontaneously among the children, following the child's comment, which to her epitomizes the value of the project, just one of many innovative curriculum projects at The Open Charter School. She says, "It doesn't matter whether you count how many seconds it takes a light to change on your corner, whether the trees are dead on your street, or whether you don't have trees at all, there is some issue in your neighborhood that you can address."

She also looks beyond the demands The Open Charter School's curriculum places upon students to an unusual quality that permeates it: honesty. "As educators we have to tap into how smart children are," she says, "and quit the authoritarian separation of 'I know and you don't.'"

Assessment: Strong Commitment to Authenticity

Student achievement at The Open Charter School is measured through statewide standardized tests and district tests, although philosophically the staff leans toward forms of authentic assessment. Arnold says, "We have student portfolios, with children encouraged to evaluate their own work and select samples of work to go into the portfolio. We also have parent-teacher conferences with the student present."

Patton says, "As a teacher and a parent, I believe we have to have some kind of statewide testing to make sure everybody deals with similar standards. In my classroom, my partner and I run a tight ship. We do high-level stuff. We try not to make the environment pressured, but to set really high standards that reflect what we expect. They do a great deal of writing, a lot of editing, and a lot of polishing of certain pieces."

Both Patton and Arnold are especially enthusiastic about The Open Charter School's three-way assessment conferences, in which the child plays an integral role. "We give the child a student evaluation sheet, and ask her to evaluate how she feels her writing and math is going," Patton says. "We require that they answer the questions on this three-page document in complete sentences."

That exercise alone is a form of assessment, she says. "If a child can't write complete sentences, I will help her. But I am still going to make her do it." If the child's self-evaluation is inflated, teachers point that out at the conference, although, Patton reports, "Usually kids are harder on themselves than others are."

Arnold agrees. "We establish a collaborative with the child. The child can't say, 'The teacher is mean. The teacher doesn't like me,' and then the parent comes to school and complains about the teacher. This way everything is totally straightforward."

Collaboration

To Arnold, the collaborative structure of The Open Charter School is the skeleton upon which the best learning experience can be constructed. "The strength of the school is its collaborative tone and everyone being together. Our mission is to focus on children's learning, and whatever we think is straightforward, it is out there."

Arnold points out that it is unrealistic, even unnatural to expect perfect agreement among staff at all times. To her, one sign that the school's collaborative culture is alive and well is its above-board tone and style, adhered to by all staff.

She says candidly, "We do have disagreements and arguments about what should be done, but everything is above board. We discuss things outright because ultimately what is best for the child is in everybody's heart. Even the parents, ultimately, will defer to the teacher."

Self-Evaluation and Monitoring

Part of the school's culture stresses ongoing self-evaluation for teachers, who appear to approach their work as a vocation, not an occupation. For example, there is no possibility Patton or her peers can be bored, she says, because their class preparation is simply too demanding and rigorous.

Yet neither she nor other teachers see this as onerous. Interestingly, unlike many teachers in bureaucratically organized schools who believe educational research is too "ivory tower" and divorced from everyday reality, Patton wishes she had more time to read research to inform and stimulate her practice.

Obviously, this approach to teaching and interacting with children can become all-consuming — a concept Patton applauds. "Why shouldn't it be?" she asks rhetorically. "It makes sense to me that you ought to teach what you love and that you ought to learn what you teach."

Arnold is eager to move to peer evaluations for teachers, saying, "It would fit in perfectly because the teachers are already divided into teams. All they have to do is give each other feedback, and I am encouraging them to ask one another to observe them and give them feedback on something."

But the fervor of The Open Charter School means that it is not a workplace for all teachers — nor will all teachers be happy or fit in easily. Both Patton and Arnold mention the rigorous demands staff place upon one another — an aspect of the school as a workplace that has been maintained partly through the school's ability to hire the staff they want. Patton says, "We have gotten savvy about the hiring process. We have been burned a couple of times, and we are careful."

What do staff look for in prospective teachers? "Commitment," Patton replies immediately, "understanding of curriculum, and love of kids. We might ask: Tell us about the projects you do in your school. If they have a weeklong assignment, we see that as one level of commitment. If they do something for a year, that is another level of commitment. If they are doing something on the governing board and arranging speakers to come into the school, that is what we are looking for."

Implementing Professional Development

Staff development does not stop with teachers attending workshops, because there is a built-in mechanism to ensure that teachers will apply and refine what they learn when they return to their classrooms. Arnold says, "Teachers wanted to refine the instruction in math and science, and this year we sent six teachers — one per cluster — plus myself to a weeklong science institute sponsored by the University of Southern California."

The institute did not end with principal and teacher participation, however, because the six participating teachers and Arnold planned how to involve the remaining teachers in a critical scrutiny of the science program. "We started the process of using the science framework to identify important ideas and concepts in science, deciding where we will emphasize them during the six years that children are here in school."

The next step will be a weekly, hourlong "Teachers' Dialogue" for six teachers, alternating weekly, so that all twelve teachers will have an opportunity to meet and work on the science concepts alternating weeks.

"We will use the dialogue approach to look at the materials, to see how we can expand what we are doing now. The teachers here," Arnold says with pride, "really have a lot of expertise. If they draw from one another and use the resources here at the school, they can polish their teaching. They don't need people from the outside telling them what to do. We find that meaningful staff development is a dialogue, an ongoing collaboration between the principal, the teachers, and outside resources."

Although their work is grueling, staff look to the future with optimism. Arnold says, "Here as a principal I have a wonderful environment. I get to learn a lot. Personally, I find it stimulating because I deal with very strong parents and deal with different situations. The most interesting question for me is: What can we create that will be the best in public schooling for children?"

Not surprisingly, Patton has a similar vision. "We are looking toward the future," she says passionately, "and we want to be on the cutting edge both in curriculum and in its application to technology as well. We are seeking to better ourselves and offer what we know to other people."

"I am still learning."

Michelangelo

Florin High School, Elk Grove District, Sacramento, California

What challenges does a high school — traditionally the last bastion of conventional practice — face when committed to restructuring for a communal, collaborative structure? How does it deal with an ambitious, ever-shifting program and an extremely diverse student population? How does the principal's leadership style foster teacher engagement and collaboration so that barriers between content areas are diminished? Built in 1989, Florin High School opened with 1,100 students ninth and tenth grades) and has added a grade each year. Experiencing rapid growth, Florin presently enrolls approximately 2,500 students, has an AFDC count of approximately 36 percent, and is markedly diverse: 36 percent White, 17 percent African American, 12 percent Hispanic, 25 percent Southeast Asian, 1 percent Native American, and 8-9 percent Filipino/Pacific Islander. Twenty-nine different languages are spoken daily at the school.

In some ways staff at Florin High School were presented with an enviable challenge in the late 1980s: the opportunity to plan a new high school, one committed to ongoing restructuring and a collaborative work environment within which an emphasis on student learning would be paramount. Chosen to participate in an ASCD-sponsored initiative to create the school of the future, their views were broadened by visits to schools nationwide where they gleaned ideas.

And Florin's staff was receptive to what they witnessed. Today, they use words like "visionary" and "cutting edge" when they talk about the agenda set for the school. Teachers clearly have thought carefully about the meaning of "restructuring," a term frequently used somewhat loosely in the educational community. As Sue Verne, Florin's restructuring coordinator and a social studies teacher, explains, "Restructuring means that a school is a demonstration school, a visionary school, a school on the cutting edge of making changes, a school that doesn't have all the answers, a school that shows constant change."

Although Florin's creation was not a top-down initiative, the importance of the principal as leader was underscored when its first principal, William Huyitt, was appointed a year and a half before the school's physical existence. The current principal, Odie Douglas, at that time vice-principal, was an integral part of the initial planning, and was promoted into his current position in 1992, thus avoiding a leadership vacuum and possible loss of continuity.

Collaboration for Curriculum and Governance

Douglas remembers the initial planning and the general beliefs to which staff shared a commitment. "We wanted to be able to meet the needs of every student," he recollects æ and that philosophy meant a demanding environment for both students and staff. Administrators and teachers agreed they wanted to offer a challenging college preparatory curriculum to all students in a setting of heterogeneous grouping — and they wanted to depart from traditional subject-focused instruction to have a focus on interdisciplinary education. "We wanted this focus primarily in English and social studies," Douglas explains, "but also in other academic subjects as well."

To ensure that teachers didn't succumb to content-focused, rigidly separated instruction — all too common in high schools — Florin's first principal, Bill Huyitt, and Douglas worked with staff to plan a collaborative structure both for curriculum and governance. Rather than departments, the school is grouped in broad divisions to allow as much interdisciplinary work as possible and to facilitate communication across content areas.

The five divisions consist of math, science, and technology; cultures and literature; visual and performing arts; health and P.E.; and instructional support, which consists of counseling and special education. These divisions, through their structure, demand that teachers see their content areas within a larger context. For instance, math teachers do not interact at a departmental level solely with other math teachers; instead, they engage in dialogue with science and technology teachers in efforts to integrate all of their classroom work.

> *"Restructuring means that a school is a demonstration school, a visionary school, a school on the cutting edge of making changes, a school that doesn't have all the answers, a school that shows constant change."*

Different committees hold responsibility for the school's decision-making, including curriculum and instruction, monitoring and evaluation, school environment, and planning and instruction. Douglas explains that the planning and instruction committee serves as the overseer committee, monitoring the school's vision and all issues that affect the school's overall functioning. All other committees feed into the planning and instruction committee and are represented on it.

This carefully crafted structure encourages each division to seek representation on each committee, he explains. Although committee participation is not mandatory, currently 60 to 70 percent of the teaching staff serve on one committee or more.

Parents also serve on each committee in a deliberate effort to empower them and expand their input into the decision-making processes of the school, which helps to decrease barriers that might exist between school staff and low-income parents or parents of color. Students are represented as well.

Consensus must be reached on each and every decision, a time-consuming and delicate process aided by Douglas's nontraditional view of himself as a leader and his collaborative view of leadership. The essence of the consensus-building process, he says, means that staff are asked continuously if they can live with decisions that they make.

"We use voting to give an indication of the majority opinion," he says, "but if the group as a whole cannot live with the majority decision, we simply have to continue to work with the decision until they can live with it."

What if a stalemate is reached? Clearly, Douglas isn't easily frustrated. "We continue to work through it," he says, "and it can be time-consuming. To aid the process, we issue whatever research we have ahead of time so that committee members can examine it and present issues that are both objective and based upon some research base."

As an example, Douglas explains how a schedule change became one of those decisions staff could not live with, and how a nontraditional view of leadership aided the consensus-reaching process. "We added 20 minutes to Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday so that staff could gather for an hour every Wednesday five minutes before the start of school. Teachers were getting out of school on that day an hour and five minutes early — but we had a problem with student security because the buses were not coming until the regular time."

The time was intended originally as collaborative planning time for teachers and extracurricular activity time for students, but as Douglas says pragmatically, "When you have 2,500 students, they are not all going to be involved in something. It had to change, but when we took a vote, 53 were in favor of changing it and 30 were not."

"I deliberately tried not to be the focus," he says, "and another staff member asked the question that was the bottom line: 'Who is willing to supervise the afternoon activities?' There were no volunteers, so we moved on to discuss the morning activity time versus the afternoon activity time. Teachers were willing to change the morning schedule; the buses will bring the kids later so we will not have supervision problems."

An Emphasis on Community

Florin does not see itself as an educative island, separate from the community that it serves — a concept especially critical for schools actively restructuring to ensure that teachers and students will be engaged in their work. Just as parent representation on schoolwide decision-making committees helps break down barriers and improves communication between families and the school, so does active involvement in school life from the greater community.

An example of the school's partnership with the community is a Partners' Breakfast recently hosted by the school, attended by over 50 of the school's partners, described by Verne as a variety of representatives from businesses and academe. The breakfast was one of Florin's ongoing events to recognize and thank the community for its initiatives undertaken on behalf of the school.

"We might partner with a local donut shop that is willing to support our athletic Booster club," Verne says, "or the dean of engineering at Sacramento State. Other partners might be attorneys who helped with our mock trial competition; the California Department of Transportation, which adopted the school; or All-State Insurance Agency, which has mentored some of our students."

Clearly, this kind of broad-based community support requires entrepreneurial actions from school staff, coupled with a willingness to convince the outside community that the school is a worthy investment. Although some school-business-academe partnerships exist in name only, Florin's partners each have a different — and integral — role that Verne sees as a foundation for the ambitious curriculum and assessment plans that are the essence of Florin's mission.

Interdisciplinary Instruction

Although Douglas describes Florin's schedule as "primarily traditional — hour classes for the most part" — English and social studies classes are teamed in an unusual way. Teachers plan their instruction together in a daily hour prep period — although interdisciplinary preparation time is voluntary, not mandated. The classes are not team-taught, but students experience continuity in thematic instruction between the English and social studies classes they take.

There is some latitude, Douglas says. "If an English teacher and a social studies teacher want to hold their students for a couple of hours, they could do that, if they agree with their partner that it is necessary, because the classes have the same students."

Although the interdisciplinary, thematic approach to instruction was part of Florin's original mission, it has met with mixed success, Douglas says frankly. On the one hand, he is pleased that teachers appear to be succeeding in efforts to transcend traditional roles as deliverers of information to what he calls "facilitators who are learning themselves." It is exciting, he says, to see teachers encouraging students to demonstrate different learning styles and avenues of problem-solving. "It is wonderful to go into a classroom during a final exam," he adds, "and see performance-based activities, students giving presentations, students explaining information both in writing and orally."

Still, he sees considerable room for improvement. Overall, student achievement as measured on district standardized tests and SATs, is disappointing to staff at Florin, with standardized test scores around the 50th percentile in some areas and below that in others.

"Many teachers feel that the tests don't address what we are doing," he says. As a result, monitoring student progress is interpreted broadly as a combination of standardized test scores; the grade distribution of students at a "C" or above ("admittedly subjective by teacher," Douglas quickly notes); the number of students enrolled in courses that meet the sequence of courses necessary to be eligible for admission in the University of California system; and new, performance-based assessments developed by staff.

Much remains to be done, Douglas adds. "We are trying to standardize our authentic assessment practices so we can demonstrate that our students are learning, but at the same time we realize that our students need to show their ability on standardized tests."

Commitment to Diversity

Because of the almost overwhelming diversity of Florin's students, its curriculum attempts to break down cultural, ethnic, and racial barriers through a focus on beliefs all students and teachers share. In Verne's 12th grade government class, for example, she brings government close to home, leading class discussions about the changing demographics, especially in California, and student demographics at Florin.

"Doing that makes them more aware of the changes in California and how they will take part in them," Verne said. "We then move into discussions about who at Florin will go to college."

This concrete representation of the stratification of power has a powerful impact on students, notes Verne, who adds: "At that point, you can hear a pin drop in the class."

As the next step, she works to empower students to envision a future for themselves. "When students see these things," she says, "they're more apt to want to stay in the system, especially when you show them a breakdown of state and local government, including who is elected and who is in power. You tell them: 'You can make a difference.' For the immediate future, that means staying in school and graduating."

Her biggest fear — one shared by other staff at Florin — is that students will leave school prematurely. "I spend a lot of time on local government issues, because that is where they can get involved at the grass roots level. They are required to spend from two to five hours outside the school seeing government in action, interviewing somebody, or shadowing somebody at the state or local level."

This is a big assignment, Verne says, for students who may never have seen the state capitol. She is equally committed to discussions that focus on responsibility. "I work on their civic virtue by making deals with them to work in the tutoring center after

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school, or help me run the recycling effort at school. When I bring in newspapers, we talk about who is making the decisions, what the conflicts are, what the responsibilities are."

Students have an opportunity to exercise their responsibilities as citizens through pairing with immigrant, non-English speaking students in a Cooperative House designed for students who have mastered English well enough to be mainstreamed into the regular curriculum after their original brief placement in a Newcomers' House.

"Native English-speaking students volunteer for the Cooperative House," Verne explains, "which is one period a day, where kids get the same curriculum as they would elsewhere in the school. Teachers tell me the kids are doing marvelously well."

Douglas summarizes the diversity of Florin's students as one of the school's biggest challenges — and also its greatest strength. "The diversity of ability, languages, cultures, ethnicities are assets, as well as challenges, that make it doubly important that we work collaboratively," he says.

Are there sanctions for poor teacher performance or a lack of willingness to work collegially? "In our evaluations," Douglas says, "if we think a teacher is falling short, we discuss that with the teacher, hopefully in a way that will help the teacher see areas of concern, whether they are in curriculum development, instructional strategies, or student performance. Next, together we come up with a plan of action for improvement of that area."

He adds, "If a teacher is not able to be reflective, and feels that he or she is doing a wonderful job — which you observe to be a disaster — than we have to look for an intervention that is more direct and prescriptive. I don't like to do that, because when I do it I am taking ownership of the situation and pushing that teacher where he or she may not see he or she needs to go."

Teachers and Students

Douglas sees himself as an ongoing learner, almost frenetically working to stay ahead of the leadership challenges that face him at Florin. "Whenever I visit a class on an informal basis, or chat with kids, I ask: 'How can I make this school better?' My assessment of this school is ongoing; it is continuous."

He also sees himself as a role model in professional development for his staff. Douglas is finishing his doctoral work in curriculum and instruction at the University of San Francisco, with a dissertation that focuses on predictors of academic achievement for high-performing African American male high school students.

"I am studying the ones who are doing well so that their successes can be replicated," he says. "There is so much information on the ones who aren't making it, and so little on those who succeed."

Verne also sees herself as learning continuously, almost to the point of exhaustion, but she believes the level of effort is worth it. "When kids see the collegiality that teachers have with each other, it spins off to them," she says. "As we become consensus builders in our governance process, it transfers to the classroom. Just being the professional community that we are — in which we see ourselves as professional teachers — imparts an expectation for achievement to students."

Through the stories of these three restructuring, communally organized schools, we see different accomplishments, with City Park Secondary School almost as an exemplar that has achieved the ideal of collaboration and teacher engagement, with a strong focus on academic achievement for students. The Open Charter School and Florin High School are "works in progress" — enjoying many substantive achievements, strong leaders with commitment to empowering staff and raising student achievement through a variety of creative curricula — yet struggling with the ongoing process of change.

How does your own school mesh with the practices presented in the preceding vignettes? In what ways does your own leadership style encourage and facilitate teacher engagement? We encourage you to consider this, and use the following self-reflection tool to evaluate your own leadership style.

> *As leaders, we play a crucial role in selecting the melody, setting the tempo, establishing the key, and inviting the players. But that is all we can do. The music comes from something we cannot direct, from a unified whole created among the players — a relational holism that transcends separateness. In the end, when it works, we sit back, amazed and grateful.*
>
> Margaret J. Wheatley, from *Leadership and the New Science* (1992)

BECOMING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS: EMERGING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

The following questions will help you to reflect on your leadership and suggest ways to support the emergence and growth of community in your school.

Ways of Leading and Managing	*always*	*frequently*	*sometimes*	*never*
Have we worked together to articulate a shared purpose and educational vision?	○	○	○	○
Do we take collective responsibility for school practices and outcomes?	○	○	○	○
Do leaders in our school emphasize power through people than power over people?	○	○	○	○
Is authority in our school based more on competence and professional knowledge, rather than position and rules?	○	○	○	○
Is leadership in our school characterized more by an image of "an ensemble playing as one" than by an image of the "captain heading the cavalry"?	○	○	○	○
Do leaders in our school facilitate, guide, and coach others to work toward commonly held goals?	○	○	○	○
Do leaders communicate their values and mission in the things they do, how they spend their time, and what they consider important?	○	○	○	○

Approaches to Problem Solving and Decisionmaking	*always*	*frequently*	*sometimes*	*never*
Are discussion and inquiry common and accepted practices in our school?	○	○	○	○
Do we share information and make decisions together?	○	○	○	○
Do we solve problems collaboratively?	○	○	○	○
Are we open to multiple approaches and solutions rather than reliance on single answers and past practices?	○	○	○	○
Is decisionmaking consensual and inclusive as opposed to top-down and nonparticipatory?	○	○	○	○
Concerning Learning				
Is classroom learning authentic and reflective of issues that are important to our students?	○	○	○	○
Do we engage students as active learners and co-constructers of knowledge?	○	○	○	○
Do we provide opportunities for students to direct and be responsible for their own learning?	○	○	○	○
Does learning develop thinking skills for all children rather than emphasize rote acquisition of basic skills?	○	○	○	○

	always	frequently	sometimes	never
Do classroom practices provide opportunities to apply and use knowledge in a variety of contexts?	○	○	○	○
Do we use cooperative learning groups rather than relying solely on independent work and competition?	○	○	○	○
Are some learning experiences interdisciplinary?	○	○	○	○
Do learning experiences in our school incorporate resources outside of the classroom?	○	○	○	○

Structural Conditions

	always	frequently	sometimes	never
Are roles in our school flexible and interdependent rather than rigid and hierarchical?	○	○	○	○
Do teachers have considerable autonomy and discretion to plan curriculum and organize instruction within an overall framework?	○	○	○	○
Do we use teams to plan and implement school improvement?	○	○	○	○
Are there opportunities for dialogue and planning across teams, grades, and subjects?	○	○	○	○
Is communication in our school open and fluid as opposed to regulated by traditional chains of command?	○	○	○	○

Relating to the Community

	always	frequently	sometimes	never
Do we encourage widescale participation of stakeholders — parents, community members, and students?	○	○	○	○
Do we empower parents and community members to participate in decisions about our school?	○	○	○	○
Do we forge partnerships with community organizations, agencies, and businesses to address the needs of children and families?	○	○	○	○
Are we linking a variety of health and human services to our school?	○	○	○	○

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NEW LEADERS FOR URBAN SCHOOLS

Acknowledgements

Jeri Nowakowski, Executive Director
Lynn J. Stinnette, Director, Urban Education
Robin LaSota, Program Coordinator,
Urban Education
1900 Spring Road, Suite 300
Oak Brook, Illinois 60521-1480
(800)356-2735 FAX: (708) 571-4716

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NCREL's Urban Education Program provides city schools and districts with the resources to reform their schools and improve outcomes for all students. Assistance is provided in the form of print, audio, video, and multimedia products as well as technical assistance, workshops, training, and other activities designed to meet the unique needs of urban educators.

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WORKING PAPER

BENCHMARKS FOR SCHOOLS

Excellence in Professional Development and Professional Community

U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

The following is excerpted from OERI's Working Paper on "Excellence in Professional Development and Professional Community" by Judith Warren Little (summer of 1996). The complete 31-page paper is available from the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Working papers were commissioned to promote the exchange of ideas among researchers and practitioners.

Introduction

Schools that exhibit a high level of success with students, sometimes against considerable odds, supply consistent portraits of work environments conducive to teacher learning. Consistent with this portrait, schools considered to be "outstanding" are likely to be schools that:

- emphasize teachers' individual and collective responsibility for student achievement and well-being, and make inquiry into student learning a cornerstone of professional development;
- organize teachers' work in ways that demonstrably reduce teacher isolation and enhance opportunities for teacher learning, both inside and outside the school;
- employ staff development resources in ways that increase the school's ability to acquire feedback on its own performance, evaluate emerging demands or opportunities, and make well-informed use of new ideas, materials, and colleagues; and conduct staff evaluation and program or school reviews in a manner consistent with teacher learning.

This paper focuses on conditions of teacher learning, but the same arguments ... apply to the professional support and development of administrators, counselors, instructional aides, and other specialists.

Inquiry into Student Learning

A school organized for teacher learning would promote the systematic study of teaching and learning in multiple ways. First, the school would support teachers in investigating questions, problems, and curiosities that arise in teaching. In some schools, committees responsible for curriculum, instruction, and assessment fund teacher research mini-grants. In other schools, the process is more informal. A writing workshop formed by teachers in one elementary school met weekly after school to "get smarter" about helping children become good writers; they started by examining samples of their own students' work, and gradually branched out to other resources. Examples of teacher inquiry abound -- studies of the "full inclusion" classroom, or the meaning that students attach to "good work," students experience of "de-tracked" classrooms, or the effects of an interdisciplinary "house" structure on high school students' attendance and performance.

Second, a school would promote the study of teaching and learning by developing the organizational habit of shared student assessment, employing a range of evidence that might span standardized tests, student portfolios, performances or exhibitions, periodic schoolwide writing prompts or open-ended math problems, and the like. School improvement and professional development initiatives have increasingly made assessment of student work a central component of their activities. Some provide a structured process for describing, analyzing, and reporting on student progress. In this and other such ventures, teachers begin with samples of students' work or classroom experience (for example, samples of various writing genres, or videotaped excerpts from math lessons on a common topic). Using samples of student work as a point of departure, teachers begin to investigate the relationships among the academic work students are asked or invited to do, the support they are given to do it and the work they produce.

Organization of Teacher Time

Schools differ dramatically in the sheer volume of concentrated out-of-class time they make available for professional development or other joint work during the salaried day, week, and year. Traditionally, allocations of out-of-class time in U.S. schools have been relatively modest. Further, they have varied across levels and communities and sometimes even within schools. Secondary schools are more likely than elementary schools to provide teachers with personal planning time during the school day. Some districts preserve an even more elaborate hierarchy of personal planning time, with primary grade teachers having the least.

A first test of adequate time for teacher learning is the simple ratio of in-class to out-of-class time during the salaried work schedule, exclusive of periodic "release time" in which substitutes assume responsibility for students. (Release time activities do not typically relieve teachers of instructional responsibility -- many teachers view having a substitute as more work, not less -- and they entail an opportunity cost to students.) The larger the available share of out-of-class time, the more likely that time will be used for activities beyond the rudiments of personal preparation (copying handouts, phoning a parent, or simply getting a cup of coffee and going to the bathroom).

Schools have begun to demonstrate the feasibility of alternative time configurations and to suggest the benefits that may accrue to both students and teachers . Teachers in restructuring high schools have arranged prep periods in common with colleagues to whom they are most closely tied, such as teachers with responsibility for 9th grade "core" classes, or members of school-within-a-school teams. Teachers in elementary schools have created blocks of time for their collaborative work in one of two ways: by rearranging the instructional week, "banking" time on four longer days in preparation for one day in which students begin school later or leave school earlier; or by scheduling students' time with specialists in physical education, art, or music in ways that permit grade level or cross-grade teams to meet together. At issue here is the school's ability to create adequate teacher time without sacrificing instructional time with students.

Although most teachers would welcome additional planning and preparation time, the simple availability of time does not ensure that it will be organized so that teachers may pursue professional development or other joint work. Out-of-classroom time has a large appetite, and there is much in the daily experience of schools to feed it. Among the five "restructured" schools profiled by Louis and Kruse (1995) and their colleagues, only two had organized time in ways that promoted professional community. In two others, time had been made available but was not used in ways that fostered professional exchange. Blocks of time may more assuredly nurture professional community where teachers share responsibility for students or otherwise have reason to work closely and regularly with one another.

Access to Information, Space, Materials, and Technology

Schools most conducive to teacher learning supply as rich a soup as possible of information, consultation, and materials. Insularity -- from useful information, stimulating alternatives, competing ideas, productive criticism -- constitutes the major threat to productive professional learning at the school level. Yet common physical space for teachers to gather and confer with one another remains at a premium in many schools. Many teachers share classrooms, and cannot count on the empty classroom as a place to meet when they are not teaching. Staff lounges or dining rooms are often (quite reasonably) dedicated to more casual exchange.

More serious than the absence of space to work is the relative scarcity of materials to work with -- books, journals, reference materials, access to a telephone, computers, or to the informational riches of the Internet. At one extreme one finds schools where the library, staff workroom, or department offices constitute curriculum resource centers. At other extremes, far more numerous, curriculum resources reside only in individual classrooms, workrooms are modestly equipped, and staffrooms are barren of any reading beyond the notices on the bulletin board.

Teachers routinely claim that technology-related professional development lags behind hardware and software purchases. Schools supportive of teacher learning should thoughtfully undertake teachers' preparation to make ambitious, creative, well-informed use of computers and other technology in the classroom and in teacher planning, student assessment, and other professional communications. An additional possibility for technology is its use directly in the service of professional development. For example, teachers who participate in "video clubs" view and discuss taped excerpts of their own classrooms; by focusing on student performance in an environment of collegial support and curiosity, teachers arrive at insights into practice and at decisions to experiment that they might not achieve in more formal "feedback" settings.

School board members or parents may argue that such expenditures for teachers must take second place to expenditures for children -- at the extreme, that the need for computer software or journal subscriptions pales in the face of leaking roofs and outdated history texts. Yet the major investment in children's learning is the teacher. Parent teacher organizations and other community organizations might consider subsidizing teachers' resources in this area…to supply teachers with what they need to remain well-informed and well-prepared to teach.

Teacher Assignment

Policies and practices of teacher assignment (can either) strengthen or diminish the preparation that teachers bring to the classroom.

A first measure of teaching assignment is "good fit" at the individual classroom level, making the most of an individual teacher's existing knowledge, experience, and interest. Teachers have been shown to teach more conservatively, didactically, and inflexibly where they are not confident in the content they are expected to teach or in their ability to teach a particular group of students. Yet studies consistently confirm that schools routinely assign inexperienced teachers to the most demanding classes (for example, concentrating new teachers in classes of low achievers at the ninth grade).

A second measure of appropriate teacher assignment is the prospect for stimulation or "stretch" in the classroom assignment. For example, some high school departments have found that agreed-upon rotation in teaching assignments broadens and deepens the staff s capacity to teach all the school's students and to teach across the school's program. It also offers a school greater "bench strength," minimizes the politics of course assignment, and ensures that the least experienced teachers are not consistently assigned to the lowest achieving students. Even at the secondary level, not all subject areas lend themselves well to such a strategy. At the elementary school, shifting grade levels can be a major undertaking. The point is to discover (and then act on) the ways in which teaching assignments stimulate new learning or breed complacency and boredom.

Feedback on Teaching

School culture and a norm of continuous improvement. The "culture of inquiry" advocated by reform enthusiasts is substantially at odds with the norm of privacy that prevails in many schools. For a school to engage seriously in a culture of inquiry, teachers must be able to initiate open and critical discussions of instruction. Where a culture of inquiry thrives, one might expect to find experienced teachers routinely observing and co-planning with beginning teachers, or teachers at a grade level comparing examples of student writing, or members of an interdisciplinary group trying to determine authentic links between subjects.

Staff evaluation. Districts have begun to adopt alternative forms of teacher evaluation for experienced teachers, including the use of portfolios or documented success with special projects. (This shifts) teacher evaluation away from exclusive reliance on administrator ratings and in the direction of methods of evaluation more genuinely reflective of the actual work of teaching.

Alternatives in the Use of Staff Development Time and Dollars

"Staff development" is still typically described and envisioned as something external to the ongoing work of teaching, something that one "does" or that is "provided" in the form of activities or events. (But) schools have ventured beyond traditional "inservice" in several ways. Virtually all of these alternatives supply teachers with more authority and resources to take charge of their own learning. Typically they enable teachers to mine each other's expertise more fully within the school and at the same time engage them in more sustained, focused contact with resources outside the school. To organize the school for teacher learning is also to make the school's walls more permeable, forming stronger links with external groups, organizations and other sources of teacher development. Some of these alternatives require a shift in the way that dollars are spent; others require no dollar investment but do call upon school leaders and teachers to make different use of time or to engage in different kinds of interaction with one another.

Teacher research and teacher study groups. Schools have begun to view teacher-initiated research as a form of professional development, and have allocated professional development funds to the support of teacher research groups (in the form of individual or team mini-grants). In some cases, teachers are encouraged to frame research topics tied to school goals, priorities, or problems; in other instances, they are afforded complete independence in deciding what to investigate. At their (best), teacher research groups meet regularly, conduct their research in partnerships or teams, and share their discoveries at conferences of fellow teacher researchers.

Staff retreats. Schools that have instituted regularly scheduled staff retreats maintain that there is no substitute for an uninterrupted block of time in which to evaluate overall school performance and to consider long-term goals. Teachers also speak to the role of retreats in building professional community, especially as new teachers join the staff. "Without it, it's hard to establish continuity with new people as they come in -- it's more like catch-as-catch-can sharing. It's possible to do short range planning and coordination without special resources, but you need periodic long term planning."

Student assessment events. In some schools, regularly scheduled staff meeting time has been devoted to assessing student work and drawing implications for school and classroom practice. To have deep or enduring effect, such discussions must occur regularly. An annual "inservice" to consider student work may be eye-opening, but is unlikely to stimulate the kind of discussion and debate that leads people to reconsider their own practice. Of all the alternatives listed here, this one is perhaps most likely to stimulate conflict among colleagues and thus to benefit from expert facilitation.

Consultation and planning days. Concentrated blocks of time enable teachers to make good on the promise of collaboration. Teachers who spend entire days focused on a single problem or topic discover what they have to offer one another and define more clearly what resources they must draw upon from the outside.

Classroom and school visitations. Observing and being observed remains rare, and careful analysis of teaching episodes even more so. Even teachers who report frequent collaboration with colleagues tend to find that it stops at the classroom door. Nonetheless, classroom and school visitations figure prominently in teachers' accounts of "getting started" with new ideas -- especially when teachers are able to visit several different classrooms (or visit one classroom on several occasions) and (then) spend time talking with (their) colleagues.

Computer and video technology for teacher development. Technology is a relatively under-examined resource for teachers' professional learning. Computer technology promises to aid teacher learning by easing access to information (Internet and CD/ROM searches) and by facilitating communication with others. Some schools have encouraged teachers' computer use and interaction among teachers by setting aside space and computers for teacher use (adjacent to the staff lounge or the library; equipped with Internet access and software useful for curriculum development). Teacher networks and collaboratives have turned to electronic networks as a way to encourage more frequent exchange among their members.

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-STUDY: ASSESSING OUR SCHOOL'S PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

(Excerpted from Judith Warren Little's article)

1. Link to student learning goals.

- What elements of the school's structure or culture build teachers' individual and collective responsibility for student achievement and serve as an impetus for teacher learning?
- What provisions does the school make for systematic inquiry into student learning? F using routine student assessment as a basis for professional development? For linking that inquiry or assessment to teachers' own development?
- What opportunities does the school create for teachers to acquire greater expertise in subject matter knowledge and subject teaching?

2. Organization of teachers' work.

- Do school schedules and staff responsibilities reduce or intensify teacher isolation? Enable and reward teacher collaboration? Has teacher time been organized to ensure adequate opportunity for consultation among teachers?
- Do teacher assignment policies and practices make it likely that teachers will make th best use of what they know and be stimulated to learn more? Will they bring teachers into contact with colleagues from whom they can learn? Do they ensure that students will have access to well-qualified and confident teachers?
- Do resource allocation practices facilitate teachers' access to equipment, work space, reference materials, technology, and supplies that support their work and their professional development?
- How does the school accommodate differences in teacher experience, interests, and responsibility? What formal and informal support does the school provide for beginning teachers, newly hired teachers, and teachers undertaking a significant cha in responsibilities? What opportunities does the school offer for experienced teach including opportunities for teacher leadership?

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3. Participation in professional development activity.

- Does the school afford teachers significant on-site learning opportunities (including common planning times, mentoring, teacher-initiated research) and out-of-school professional activities (networks, professional associations, conferences, links with colleges, industry, museums)?
- What steps does the school take to ensure that professional learning extends to all adults, including classified staff?

4. Staff evaluation and school or program review.

- What part does the assessment of student learning play in the evaluation of staff performance or in the evaluation of the school program?
- What opportunities do teachers and others have to obtain timely and useful feedback on their own professional performance from colleagues or supervisors?
- Does staff evaluation take serious account of individuals' participation in professional development and its effect on practice? (Does it matter whether individuals are doing anything serious to improve their own work or that of others?)
- What evidence does the school employ to assess the impact of professional development?

5. Ethos that values learning.

- What role do administrators and other school leaders play in encouraging and supporting professional learning in the school?
- Do staff evaluation, school review, or school-level decision making practices establish an environment of professional trust, mutual support, and the disclosure of problems? Or do they foster competitiveness, privacy, and "problem hiding"?
- In what ways would an observer know that the school is an intellectually stimulating and personally rewarding place for teachers and other professionals to work? In what ways do students see evidence of teachers' involvement in learning?

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Students at the Center:
A National Teleconference on School Reform

Selected Readings About Engaging Families and Communities

a) *Blue Ribbon Panel Working Paper: School, Family and Community Partnerships* by Mavis Sanders. **(EXCERPTS)**
b) *Topical Synthesis #8: Community-Based Learning: A Foundation for Meaningful Educational Reform* by Thomas R. Owens and Changhua Wang, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, OR January, 1996.
c) "New Directions in Parent Involvement" by Norm Fruchter, Anne Galletta and J. White, published in *Equity and Choice*, Spring 1993.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ★ UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ★

WORKING PAPER

BENCHMARKS FOR SCHOOLS

School, Family, and Community Partnerships

U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

The following is excerpted from OERI's Working Paper which is available from the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools Program. Working papers were commissioned to promote the exchange of ideas among researchers and practitioners; this paper was dated September 1997.

Introduction

In educational research, it has been found that children with well-developed social networks have more positive educational outcome than children without them. Social networks are defined as "the . . . availability of people in whom we can rely, people who let us know that they care about, value, and love us." The greater a youth's social support, the greater the likelihood that he or she will succeed in school. Although research has provided substantial evidence that family and community involvement is important to children's academic success, most schools still have quite limited relationships with their students' families and communities. This situation can be remedied. Schools can take the lead in promoting more expansive school-family-community partnerships by creating comprehensive programs that involve families and communities in children's education and development.

Based on years of research, Epstein (1995a) has identified six types of school-family-community involvement that are important for student learning and development, and essential for a comprehensive school-family-community partnership program. The six types of involvement are: 1) parenting, 2) communicating, 3) volunteering, 4) learning at home, 5) decision-making, and 6) collaboration with community. Different practices can be implemented to foster each of the six types of involvement. The objective, however, is for schools, families, and their surrounding communities to aid each other in rearing healthy, successful children. Each type of involvement is summarized in Table I below.

SIX TYPES OF SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Type	Definition
Parenting	Helping all families establish home environments that support children as students and helping schools understand families
Communicating	Designing and conducting effective forms of two-way communication about school programs and children's progress
Volunteering	Recruiting and organizing help and support for classrooms, school functions and student activities
Learning at Home	Providing information, ideas and opportunities to families about how to help students at home with academic decisions, homework, and curriculum-related activities
Decision-making	Including families in various aspects of school governance
Collaborating with Community	Strengthen and support schools, students and their families, and from schools, families and students to support the community

Type I - Parenting

Schools can assist families in providing shelter, food and clothing through organized activities and programs such as clothing swaps and food co-operatives. Schools can also help families by linking them to community agencies that provide inexpensive or free goods and services to those in need. Schools that reach out to families through supportive programs can help to improve the quality of their students' home lives and ensure that their students are ready to learn when they enter school each day.

Schools can also assist today's families in creating home environments that contribute to children's school performance by guiding them in two forms of family interaction: valuing and monitoring . Valuing refers to the process by which families directly and indirectly communicate the importance of education to their children. Students whose families place a high value on education and achievement tend to perform well in school. Monitoring is the process by which families supervise activities and behaviors that enhance or diminish school behavior. Monitoring may include the enforcement of rules on homework completion and/or television viewing and the establishment of a routine for students' studying.

For example, one school in Baltimore worked to organize an Attendance Summit. During the Summit, important information about attendance was shared with parents and calendars, alarm clocks, and small gifts that could be used as rewards and incentives for children were distributed. The Attendance Summit has become an annual event at the school and between 1991 and 1995 the school's attendance rate increased by 3 percent.

Type 2 - Communicating

Studies show that families and schools rarely engage in personal communication. Using a national sample of families of eighth graders, Epstein and Lee (1995) report that most parents of eighth grade students never contact their children's schools about school performance (48%), academic programs (65%) or school behavior (71%). Similarly, 45% of families report that schools never contact them about their children's school performance; 65% report that schools never contact them about their children's academic program, and 69% report that schools never contact them about their children's school behavior.

When schools do communicate with families or families with schools it is often in response to a behavioral or academic problem. This negative communication between families and schools, in many cases, widens the gulf and places schools and families in adversarial situations.

In a study of home-school communication at the secondary level, Gotts (1983) reports that families at the secondary level respond positively to receiving two types of information from high schools. First, families respond favorably to regular and timely newsletters detailing the school's programs and extracurricular events and activities. Most families in the study (90%) report reading school newsletters, only 10% report that they fail to read or ignore newsletters. Second, families at the secondary level want to receive early notification when their children are having difficulty or need assistance or corrective action. Families also report that they want information on appropriate courses of action to address difficulties. The author concludes that the families of high schoolers have a strong interest in their adolescents' school performance and school activities and programs.

In addition to newsletters, personal phone calls and home visits, other forms of school/home communication are proving effective. Some schools are using family fun-nights as an effective way to promote more personal contact and communication between schools and families about school curriculum and children's learning. Other schools have found that by sending home positive postcards, they have been able to break the perception of many students and families that school-to-home communications are always negative.

To ensure that communications are received and to create a purposeful dialogue with the recipients, many schools are developing two-way letters and newsletters by including tear-off sections that are designed to elicit comments, suggestions and/or questions. Other schools list phone numbers where families and community members can direct their concerns, and still others have suggestion boxes located prominently in the school building.

Type 3 - Volunteering

Volunteering is, perhaps, one of the most familiar forms of family and community involvement. However many schools have low rates of family volunteerism. Schools that encourage volunteerism among their families are most often pleased with the responses they receive. Various strategies are used to recruit and train volunteers, and match their time and talents to the needs of teachers, students, and administrators. These include surveys in which families and community members list their talents, skills, and schedules; volunteer bulletin boards where teachers' needs are posted and summer volunteer training workshops where participants learn to work with school equipment and acquire other skills to increase their confidence and effectiveness as volunteers. Participants in these workshops often become paid employees at the school.

In their efforts to develop a successful volunteer program, it is important for schools to plan ways to acknowledge and celebrate their volunteers. Some schools organize volunteer luncheons; others list the names of volunteers in school newsletters or on highly visible bulletin boards; others provide small gifts of appreciation, while others do all three. Most importantly, family and community volunteers know that their time and assistance is of great value to the school.

Type 4 - Learning at Home

According to Epstein (1986), the form of involvement that families are most interested in is how they can help their children with learning at home. Although most families of children in elementary school help their children with homework activities, most parents report that they could help more if the teachers showed them what to do and helped them become more knowledgeable about their children's needs (Epstein, 1986). Many schools, however, do not provide families with information on how to help their children with learning at home. This is especially true for middle schools and high schools that often assign homework that is designed to be done alone, without interactions with families. More than half (56%) of families with children in the middle grades report that they never, seldom or infrequently (once or twice a month) help their children with homework (Epstein and Lee, 1995).

Schools are also helping families encourage their children's learning and academic achievement by designing interactive homework. Such homework is designed to promote greater interaction between families and children around schoolwork. Well designed interactive homework does not require that the family *teach* the child a particular subject. Instead, it enables families to better support, listen, react to, praise, guide, monitor and discuss the work that their children bring home (Epstein and Salinas, 1995, revised).

For many schools, interactive homework also includes the community. Children are assigned homework exercises that require them to explore their neighborhoods and learn more about the individuals and institutions around them. Through such activities, children's learning is not confined to the classroom, or to the home, but is extended into their communities.

Type 5 - Decision Making

Family involvement in school decision making is a central goal of school based management and other school reform efforts. Research suggests that families from lower educational and social class backgrounds, and ethnic, racial and linguistic minority backgrounds often feel alienated from schools and school decision making. Many schools are critically evaluating their parent organizations and other decision making bodies, looking for ways to strengthen them and involve more families. Schools without parent organizations, most noticeably middle schools and high schools, are exploring ways to start them. Other schools are working with community organizations to conduct leadership training workshops for families so that they can be more effective representatives on school decision making bodies, such as school improvement teams.

Type 6 - Collaborating with the Community

The last of Epstein's Six Types of Involvement is collaborating with the community. This last type facilitates cooperation and interaction between schools, families and groups, organizations, agencies and individuals in the community to achieve commonly agreed upon goals. Within communities, there are many resources -- human, economic, material and social -- that can support and enhance home and school activities (Sanders, 1996c). Likewise, communities can benefit from the assistance of families, students, and schools. As conceived by Epstein, the connections between schools and communities should be two-way. That is, community resources should be mobilized to help schools, families and students -- and educators, parents and children should be likewise organized to help their communities.

Community Linkages. For some schools, collaborating with the community may consist of developing linkages with community agencies and businesses that provide requested resources and/or services. For example, some schools are working with community agencies to inform families about community programs and services for children. Many families do not know how to find tutoring programs for their children, how to have their children placed with Big Brothers or Big Sisters, or how to ensure that their children will have constructive activities in which to engage after school or during the summer. Participation in these types of activities has been shown to increase student optimism, academic achievement and school engagement. Many schools assist families in finding available programs and services by developing family resource manuals. To complete the manuals, schools must first know their families and their communities. Schools cannot be islands and have effective school-family-community partnerships. Schools must reach out so that families and communities can reach in -- for the benefit of children.

Service Integration. Service integration or "one stop shopping" is an increasingly popular form of school-family-community collaboration (McDonnell, 1989). Through this collaborative effort, schools, social service agencies and health providers attempt to provide more efficient service to children and their families who need it. A number of schools have found that when the provision of education and human services is integrated, students and their families benefit. One example is Public School 218 in New York City which now serves 1,500 students in grades 6-8 and their families. The school is open 15 hours a day, 6 days a week, year-round. Over one thousand parents are regularly involved in courses and workshops offered them at the school. Social service and business partnerships work with the school to address the needs of students and families.

Similarly, program administrators in Las Cruces, New Mexico are combining health, educational and social services to meet the special needs of their families whose lives are complicated by poverty and recent immigration. Families of pre-schoolers, for example, are guaranteed preventive health and dental care, transportation to and from health and social services, the assistance of a bilingual staff, child care for younger children and adult education classes. For Las Cruces' teen parents, the Las Cruces Alternative High School offers a fully integrated nursery, parenting education classes, transportation to and from school, academic and career counseling, and for a fortunate few, subsidized housing.

Dolan identifies five components of successful programs. First, service integration programs must be based on mutual respect and trust. Second, the school administration and staff need to be involved in decision-making about service integration and feel some sense of ownership. Third, school principals often have to redefine their roles and take on the additional responsibility of coordinating the services being provided. Fourth, agencies need to stretch boundaries and share information, develop common procedures, pool financial resources, share staff, and minimize regulations that interfere with collaboration. Finally, given the complexity of service integration, new programs should be phased in over time, beginning with the highest priority services.

Conclusion: Challenges and Insights for Successful Partnerships

The Challenge of Knowing

In order for schools to effectively communicate with and involve families in different aspects of their children's learning, schools must be aware of their families special needs, concerns, linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds and work schedules.

The Challenge of Informing

To ensure the success and equity of their school-family-community partnership program, schools should provide information from workshops and school meetings to all families, not just those who can attend the meetings. All families care about their children and need to know about their children's learning community.

The Challenge of Including

In order to be more inclusive, schools should organize volunteer work and school activities so that the maximum number of families and community members can become involved with the school in meaningful ways. Schools can program activities and events that build upon the talents and cultural backgrounds of their students' families and communities.

Ten Insights and Growing. . .

Below, ten insights are listed that should be helpful to schools committed to establishing effective, comprehensive and permanent programs of school-family-community partnerships.

1. School-family-community partnerships are a shared responsibility -- Teachers, family members, administrators, community members and others, share responsibility for developing and implementing effective partnership practices.

2. The institutionalization of school-family-community partnerships takes time -- It takes time before school-family-community partnerships are fully integrated in a school's program. However, with time and effort, the institutionalization of school-family-community partnerships can and does occur.

3. School-family-community partnerships reach out to all family members -- Schools with successful partnership programs often have a very broad definition of "family" that includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, babysitters and other caring adults. These schools' definition of family helps them to make partnerships work for all their students.

4. School-family-community partnerships improve in incremental steps with thoughtful planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement.

5. School-family-community partnerships are important throughout the grades -- As successful schools expand their partnership programs, they address the special needs of children and families at each grade level. For example, some elementary schools might implement practices to make the transition to kindergarten and from elementary school to middle school smoother for their students and families.

6. School-family-community partnerships cannot be effective without students -- Students are central to strong, comprehensive programs of partnership between schools, families and communities. They are the primary focus of communication, workshops and other school events. Their responsibilities increase with age and may include taking newsletters home and returning tear-offs to school, encouraging families to volunteer at and for the school, and participating in educational decisions.

7. School-family-community partnerships include the community -- Successful schools across the country show how strong business partners and community connections can help schools develop and improve the other five types of involvement, and create an exchange of information and resources between schools, families and communities.

8. School-family-community partnerships can help schools reach the "hard to reach" -- Schools with successful partnership programs show that even the hardest to reach families (such as families with two working parents, or families without telephones) can be reached with the right strategies and practices.

9. School-family-community partnerships link to the curriculum and student learning -- Whether through interactive homework, summer learning packets, family fun nights or GED programs, successful schools show how school-family-community connections can enhance students' learning and the ability of families and communities to assist in that learning.

10. School-family-community partnerships that are most effective meet the challenges of the six types of involvement -- Schools that are successful in developing strong connections with all families and with community representatives and agencies, not only conduct practices under each type of involvement but meet the challenges for successful implementation that accompany each type of involvement.

In sum, with time and commitment, all schools can be more successful in educating and caring for today's youth. Through the use of Epstein's framework of six types of involvement -- parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community -- parents, schools and communities can be partners in a social network that increases students' social capital and their chances for success in school and beyond.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT RESEARCH SERIES
"Research You Can Use"

Topical Synthesis #8

Community-Based Learning: A Foundation for Meaningful Educational Reform

Thomas R. Owens
Changhua Wang

In my community experience, I went from learning what something is, to applying it to real life. I learned why I need to know the things that I learned in math class. I had a chance to work with some neat people who let me try out things for myself. The mentor really seemed to care about me as a person, and I had fun.—A Student

Introduction

Many of today's leaders in education, business, and community development are coming to realize, even more than in the past, that schools alone cannot prepare our youth for productive adulthood. These leaders are ready to try new approaches that link learning activities in classrooms with a full range of learning experiences available in our communities.

Perhaps more important than the views of adults are the views of young people about themselves and their schools. Students often complain that their classes are irrelevant, not related to what occurs outside of the classroom, and lacking opportunities for hands-on applications. They feel they are treated as children instead of being given adult responsibilities. They feel cut off from meaningful relationships with caring adults. As a result, they are often unmotivated to study and view education as something imposed by adults rather than an exciting opportunity for them to develop their skills and contribute to others. In short, there is a growing consensus that change is needed in education, not only in reforming *what* is taught but also in *how* and *where* it is taught.

This topical synthesis summarizes what we have learned over the past 20 years about various community-based learning programs and describes how community-based learning can serve as an important contribution to educational reform in the future. The paper first defines what we mean by community-based learning and discusses it as a philosophy, program, set of strategies, and expected outcomes. Next, we describe the advantages of having multiple outcomes for community-based learning that include a youth development perspective. We review the barriers that have faced this form of learning. The research regarding community-based learning is discussed, followed by its contribution to educational reform. Finally, we state some conclusions and recommendations for future directions. Following the text we cite key references and general references.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204
Telephone (503) 275-9500

School, Community and Professional Development Program

What is Community-Based Learning?

This synthesis uses the term *community-based learning* as a broad framework that includes service-learning, experiential learning, School-to-Work, youth apprenticeship, lifelong learning and other types. A problem with these individual approaches is that each focuses on only a portion of the learning outcomes that can potentially be achieved through community-based learning. For example, service-learning concentrates on learning emerging from service provided to meet important needs—such as cleaning up our rivers—in a particular community, while School-to-Work generally focuses only on preparing youth for employment.

We define community-based learning as the broad set of teaching/learning strategies that enable youth and adults to learn what they want to learn from any segment of the community. Our definition provides for learners of all ages to identify what they wish to learn and opens up an unlimited set of resources to support them. By *community*, we are including the schools, formal and informal institutions in one's neighborhood, and the entire world through such resources as the Internet.

Principles of community-based learning relate to the changing nature of society, the learner, the learning processes, and sources for learning. These principles have been articulated and refined over a five-year period by participants in a summer seminar organized by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and focused on future directions in work-relevant education. This group, in preparing *A Model for Restructuring Education for the 21st Century* (Owens 1994), identified several critical assumptions that can serve as a foundation for community-based learning:

- Education must be viewed as a continuum from preschool through lifelong education for adults.
- Learning is what we do for ourselves. It therefore requires the full involvement of the learner as well as the teacher/mentor.
- Jobs in the future will require not only more education, but a different type of education that includes critical thinking, teamwork, and the ability to apply knowledge.
- Adults need to be involved in community affairs and to balance work, family and community responsibilities.
- Problems affecting learners today are much broader than schools alone can solve. Involvement of the family, business, labor, the community, and other agencies is essential.
- Resistance by some teachers, schools, and communities to the changes implied by the above assumptions is to be expected. Helping these groups to see the need for change and to feel empowered to guide these changes is an important challenge facing the new leadership in education. Without this vision, supported by adequate resources and staff development, these changes are unlikely to occur.

Examples of Community-Based Learning Programs

Many programs have been funded and developed that involve important elements of community-based learning. A few of them are described here briefly, and their contributions to the learning process are discussed in the next section. Service-learning, Experience-Based Career Education, Cooperative Education, Tech Prep, School-to-Work, and Youth Apprenticeship are some of the more common ones.

SERVICE-LEARNING

The National and Community Service Act of 1990 (amended in 1993) defined service-learning as a method of teaching and learning: 1) by which young people learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet community needs and that are coordinated with the school and community; 2) that is integrated into the academic curriculum or provides structured time for a young person to think, talk, or write about what he/she did and saw during the service activity; 3) that provides young people with opportunities to use newly acquired academic skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and 4) that enhances what is taught in the school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community and helps to foster the development of a sense of caring for others (Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform 1993, p. 971).

In a more abbreviated form, service-learning has been defined by the National Service-Learning Cooperative as "a teaching/learning method that connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility" (Poulsen 1994, p. 4). The National and Community Service Trust Act was signed in 1994 to create opportunities for young people to become personally involved in improving their communities while pursuing their personal and social development. As stated in the recent Youth Preparation for Employment policy reference document (Council of Chief State School Officers 1994, p. 23),

> Service represents a point of interface between school-, community- and work-site learning and can be used at almost any point in the youth development continuum, kindergarten through post high school. Service-learning represents an opportunity for schools and postsecondary institutions to work with employers and young people to provide meaningful opportunities for community service combined with the academic and technical skills that employers require. For children, it offers exposure to the world of work and community and provides a context for building academic and work readiness skills. For youth, it offers valuable explorations into and experiences with real world needs which can be addressed through action and initiative while further solidifying their work readiness, academic and technical skills. Service represents a holistic approach to youth development and the building of multiple competencies.

EXPERIENCE BASED CAREER EDUCATION

Experience Based Career Education (EBCE) was developed by four regional educational laboratories in the early 1970s. As Bucknam and Brand (1983) state:

> EBCE was designed to bridge the gap between study and experience and between the classroom and the community. It takes the subject matter students normally study, adds many new ingredients about people, jobs, self, and the way communities work, and lets high school and post-secondary students learn about them in the community through direct interaction with adults in all walks of life. In the process students earn academic credit, explore the real dimensions of many careers, learn much about who they are and what they want to become, and master many of the skills they will need to succeed as adults in America (p. 66).

Recently, Shumer (1995) has stated that:

> Many of the [EBCE] programs included service-learning activities, with students working in hospitals, schools, day-care centers, and many social agencies. Students tied their community learning experiences to classes held on campus, usually as part of their regular academic program. In many ways, these EBCE programs were more integrated into the curriculum than most service-learning programs today (p. 2).

The concepts of EBCE first developed in the early 1970s have generated some projects that have continued on for over 20 years. They have also served as the springboard for a new set of programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education, called Community-Based Education Centers, that are being coordinated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in six communities across the United States.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Cooperative education is probably the most common form of community-based learning program used by the schools. It was offered by 47 percent of the nation's public high schools in 1991-92 (Stern, et al. 1994, p. 5). In most cases, cooperative education is a paid experience in which students are employed in jobs directly related to the vocational courses they are studying in high school or college. Students receive school credit for this supervised work. The level of coordination between the school staff and the employers varies widely from program to program. While associated mainly with high schools or community colleges, cooperative education programs have operated successfully at a number of public and private colleges.

As a federally funded program, cooperative education has been defined in the 1990 Perkins Amendment as

> ...a method of instruction of vocational education for individuals who, through written cooperative arrangements between the school and employers, receive instruction, including required academic courses and related vocational instruction, by alternation of study in school with a job in any occupational field. Such alternation shall be planned and supervised by the school and employers so that each contributes to the student's education and to his or her employability (Stern, et al. 1994, p. 13).

TECH PREP

Tech Prep is a federally funded program begun under the Tech Prep Education Act as part of the 1990 Perkins Amendment. Tech Prep programs are operating in all 50 states through consortia involving secondary and postsecondary institutions in collaboration with business and industry. Generally, these programs start in at least 11th grade and encourage students to complete an associate degree or higher. Vocational curricula focusing on high technology areas are combined with applied academic courses that are designed to prepare students for success in high-performance workplaces. While cooperative education is generally perceived as a course or program, Tech Prep is viewed by some as a specific program focused primarily on the average student and by others as an educational reform measure intended for *all* secondary students. Key elements intended for all students include career counseling, an individual student plan, and often career clusters or pathways that all secondary students are expected to chose from in order to give direction in the high school courses they select to take.

SCHOOL-TO-WORK

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act signed into law on May 4, 1994 is one of the newcomers to the community-based learning club. Districts receiving School-to-Work funds are expected to have three major elements: 1) school-based learning related to each student's interests, including broad-based academics, career exploration and counseling; 2) work-based learning that provides a planned program of job training experiences, paid work experience, workplace mentoring, and instruction in general workplace competencies and in a broad variety of elements of an industry; and 3) activities to connect the two through training of teachers, counselors, and mentors and through involvement of schools and employers.

As with Tech Prep, School-to-Work is perceived by some educators to be a program with specific students enrolled and by others as an educational reform strategy involving all students. The legislation itself stresses that School-to-Work is intended for all students and is meant to be systemic reform. As with other educational reform efforts, School-to-Work is sometimes associated with only a portion of the community-based learning continuum and thus fails to achieve its potential impact.

YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

While the above examples of community-based learning are governed by federal legislation and funding, youth apprenticeship, as conceived by Steven Hamilton (1990) and others, draws on Hamilton's study of apprenticeships in Germany and programs such as the Finance Academy in the United States. Hamilton has described youth apprenticeship as involving workplaces as learning environments, creating opportunities for mentor relationships to provide adult role models, and developing the high levels of academic and vocational skills being sought by employers. Youth apprenticeships are viewed by Hamilton as including "the Job Corps, Summer Training and Education Program, community service, Foxfire programs, Experience-Based Career Education, cooperative education, and informal apprenticeships" (Hamilton 1990, p. 40).

Robert Jones, Assistant U.S. Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training, has said that, "In order to increase access, teach basic skills, and use work-related structures, we need to evolve a system in this country that is truly an American-styled apprenticeship and school to work system." (Northdurft and Jobs for the Future 1990, p. 19).

Learning Strategies of Community-Based Learning

While community-based learning involves a philosophy and programs, most service-learning educators agree that it is the learning strategies that are the most critical aspect of community-based learning. At the National Conference on Service-Learning, School Reform, and Higher Education in 1994, participants agreed that:

> The focus is changing and must change from teaching to learning; from outer-directed, "expert"-driven curriculum and methodologies to more learner-centered, experience-based, connected ways of acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for life in the world in which we now live and the rapidly changing world in which our young people will live and work (Poulsen 1994, p. 2).

What are the components of such community-based learning? Zeke Zellerman of the Association for Experiential Learning stated, at the 1994 Work Now and in the Future conference in Portland, Oregon, that there are three critical steps—framing (planning), the activity itself, and reflection (Dukehart 1994). The clearer the framing, the more the learner will get from the experience. Generally, the objectives for the learning are developed jointly by the student and the teacher/mentor. The second step is the activity itself, which can be simple or complex with many steps. The third critical step is reflection or a debriefing on what was learned. According to Zellerman, the reflection can be done alone (in the form of a journal, for example) or with a group. These discussions often include an analysis of what went right, what went wrong, and what was unexpected. The reflection sets the stage for framing the next related activity. Programs such as Experience-Based Career Education have developed detailed guides to help students process what they have learned as well as to raise questions for the future.

Other key elements of community-based learning or experiential learning include use of a mentor, student application of information collected (such as presenting it to a city council meeting), and integrating academic learning with real-world usage.

The role of mentors in community-based learning is critical. A mentor gives advice and encouragement, sharing the knowledge and wisdom of experience in a relationship that is personal and enduring (Hamilton 1990, p. 156). Mentors for youth may be described as teachers, challengers, role models, supporters, and companions. Ongoing research at Public Private Ventures indicates that the most successful mentors are those who are engaged in developmental relationships with youth and establish a strong, reliable bond through enjoyment of activities chosen together, as opposed to a prescriptive relationship in which they expected to change the youth (Morrow and Styles 1995).

The learning processes serving as a foundation for community-based learning are well grounded in cognitive research. At the heart of cognitive research is the observation that intelligence and expertise are built out of interaction with the environment, not in isolation from it. This research shows that effective learning engages both head and hand and requires both knowing and doing. In their classic book on cognitive research applications, Berryman and Bailey (1992) point out that "Passive, fragmented, and decontextualized instruction organized around generating right answers adds up to ineffective learning" (p. 68). Such decontextualized learning fails to enable students to examine the ideas they bring to the learning situation, to learn from their errors, or to look for patterns.

Educators interested in developing effective learning practices can gain important insight from looking at the nature of traditional apprenticeships. Berryman and Bailey identify six characteristics that could be applied to community-based learning:

1. Apprenticeship is a way of life and may not be recognized as a teaching effort.

2. The work to be done is the driving force.

3. There is a temporal ordering of skill acquisition from easy to more difficult.

4. Bodily performance and embodied knowledge are visible.

5. Standards of performance and evaluation of competence are implicit and often internalized by the apprentice.

6. Teachers and teaching are largely invisible.

Collins, Brown and Newman (1989) identified characteristics of ideal learning environments that are helpful to consider as we design effective community-based learning. Their model has four building blocks: content, methods, sequence, and sociology. Content involves the domain knowledge such as geography or architecture, tricks of the trade used by experts in solving problems, cognitive management strategies such as thinking and planning skills, and learning strategies such as those needed in exploring a new domain.

Teaching methods are used to help students observe, engage in, invent, or discover expert strategies in context. They include modeling, coaching, scaffolding and fading (suggestions or support initially given by the teacher), articulation to get students to identify the knowledge and problem-solving strategies they use, reflection to compare one's problem-solving strategies with those of experts, and exploration to solve problems and raise new questions.

Sequencing allows learning to be staged and involves increasing complexity of tasks and concepts needed, increasing diversity of strategies or skills used, and developing an overview before attending to details.

The sociology of learning involves reproducing the real-world environment for learning. It involves active communication with expert practitioners, intrinsic motivation for learning, cooperative learning, and competitive learning to compare the processes developed by various learners to create a product.

Frequently, a few of the above processes are used in individual community-based learning projects but seldom—*if ever*—are all of them systematically used in planning and carrying out learning. If they were to be used, the likelihood of more positive and consistent outcomes would increase.

Cognitive research over the past ten years has shown that the quality of cognitive performance often depends on the context in which the performance occurs. People who perform tasks well in one setting may not perform them well in other settings. Learning which is "situated" in practical, work-related contexts is both faster and more effective than learning which is purely classroom based and unrelated to the contexts in which it is to be applied (Resnick 1987).

Cognitive research is being applied today not only in schools but in industry. Erica Sorohan (1993) has identified some workplace applications of this research and illustrates five lessons learned:

- We embed learning in our individual experiences, so we learn best when we direct our own learning.
- We learn most effectively in context, so learning should be linked directly to work.
- We learn from each other, so workplaces should enable us to communicate and collaborate freely.
- We continuously create knowledge, so we need to learn how to capture what we know and share it with others.
- We learn unconsciously, so we need to learn how to recognize and question our tacit assumptions (p. 48).

The principles cited above are equally applicable to schools and workplaces.

In a study of common elements of three distinctly different types of community-based learning programs (Foxfire, EBCE, and Outward Bound), five aspects of learning strategies were identified. Common learning strategies were found to: 1) be based on an explicit theory of learning; 2) encourage learners to perform tasks normally given to adults in our society; 3) emphasize a balance of action, reflection, and application; 4) provide learning experiences that are individualized, sequential, and developmental; and 5) provide opportunities for unplanned learning from new experiences (Druian, Owens, and Owen 1995).

Given the above discussion of characteristics of effective learning, Berryman (1995) raises the question of where cognitive apprenticeship skills can best be learned—the schools or in workplaces. The answer is that they can be learned in either place if the conditions are right. To help reach a decision for a particular community, Berryman poses four useful questions (pp. 209-213):

1. Is the location organized to deliver effective and efficient learning?

2. Does the learning location reflect the knowledge demands of the workplace and the work contexts in which knowledge and skill have to be used?

3. Does the learning location deliver knowledge and skills that are broadly applicable?

4. Does the learning location blur the division between academic and vocational?

Expected Outcomes of Community-Based Learning

The outcomes of community-based learning cover the full range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to be an effective citizen, worker, and lifelong learner. Articles and research reports across the various categories of community-based learning suggest five major outcome areas: 1) academic, 2) career and vocational, 3) personal-social development, 4) service and work values, and 5) understanding and use of community resources.

As Robert Blum has pointed out,

> Goals for student learning are changing. While there is still an expectation that students learn important facts, there is growing emphasis on application of facts in problem solving and relating facts to life outside the school. In addition to learning traditional subject areas, students are expected to think critically, collaborate with others, transition smoothly from school to work, fit into an increasingly diverse community, integrate what they learn across subjects and much more. As the content of what is to be learned changes, so must the methodologies of both learning and teaching shift (Blum 1995, p. 8).

Andrew Furco, from the Service-Learning R&D Center at the University of California at Berkeley, has presented a systematic look at the similarities and differences of service-learning and School-to-Work transition programs. He describes the intended purposes of both reforms as career development, academic development, personal development, social development, civic responsibility, and ethical development (Furco 1995).

While many community-based learning programs include academic learning as an outcome, it is usually approached as a way to reinforce the basic concepts learned in school. Motivation to learn the basics and the ability to apply them to real life situations are the unique additions of community-based learning.

While School-to-Work and service learning cover a wide spectrum of learner outcomes, a third set comes from the field of youth development. These outcomes include skill in being an active and self-directed learner, leadership, and personal and social responsibility. Zeldin (1995) and others, in their attempt to integrate School-to-Work and youth development, state that young people require opportunities and supports to achieve desirable outcomes.

Two important federal initiatives provide a useful framework for looking at the learner outcomes of community-based learning—Goals 2000 and the SCANS report. The GOALS 2000: Educate America Act calls for the development of comprehensive state education strategies that result in the attainment of the national educational goals and lifelong learning systems.

Several of the national goals are being impacted directly by community-based learning. Goal 2 states that by the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent. Community-based learning makes school relevant to students by connecting academic concepts to real-life applications and makes students active learners who are responsible for their own learning.

Goal 3 deals with student achievement and citizenship. It states that by the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, and that every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy. In 1993, the nation's governors adopted service-learning as an indicator of citizenship in Goal 3.

A second curriculum framework for grouping the skills needed to be an effective worker comes from the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in the U.S. Department of Labor. In 1993 the commission produced a useful document called *Teaching the SCANS Competencies* that illustrates how these competencies can be taught in schools and communities. The SCANS outcomes are made up of five competencies and a three-part foundation of skills and personal qualities needed for high-quality job performance. The competencies state that effective workers can productively use resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology, with each of these spelled out in greater detail. For example, interpersonal skills include working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds. The foundations consist of basic skills (reading, writing, mathematics, speaking, and listening), thinking skills (thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, visualizing, knowing how to learn, and reasoning), and personal qualities (individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity).

A third grouping of community-based learning outcomes is a modification of the ones developed by the American Society for Training and Development (Carnevale, Gainer, and Meltzer 1990). In the ASTD book, *Workplace Basics: The Essential Skills Employers Want*, the authors identify seven areas: 1) learning to learn; 2) basic competencies in reading, writing, and computation; 3) communication skills of speaking and listening effectively; 4) problem solving and critical thinking; 5) managing personal and professional growth; 6) group effectiveness; and 7) influencing skills, including understanding of organizational climate and leadership. For each area, the authors describe what is intended, the theories that support it, and how it can be taught in schools and in the workplace, and then provide examples. As a result of seminar participation at the Menucha Summer Conference sponsored by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) over a three-year period, participants added three outcome areas to the ASCD list: technological literacy, social-global awareness, and general occupational skills such as safety and flexibility. For each of the ten outcome areas NWREL staff, with the input of the Menucha participants, developed a set of specific learner outcomes, school delivery strategies, and family and community-based delivery strategies (Owens 1994).

Conrad and Hedin (1989), based on a review of research in the field and various large-scale evaluations they had conducted of community-based learning programs (excluding those focused on workforce preparation), identified areas where they expected such programs to have a positive effect on youth. They grouped these outcomes under three headings: personal growth and development, intellectual development and academic learning, and social growth and development. Their specific outcomes expected are listed below.

Personal Growth and Development

- Self-esteem
- Personal efficacy (sense of worth and competence)
- Ego and moral development
- Exploration of new roles, identities, and interests
- Willingness to take risks, accept new challenges
- Taking responsibility for, accepting consequences of own actions

Intellectual Development and Academic Learning

- Higher-level thinking skills
- Content and skills directly related to service experience
- Skills in learning from experience (to observe, ask questions, apply knowledge)
- Motivation to learn and retention of knowledge
- Insight, judgment, and understanding

Social Growth and Development

- Political efficacy
- Knowledge and exploration of service-related careers
- Understanding and appreciation of, and ability to relate to, people from a wide range of backgrounds and life situations

Whereas the outcomes listed above are expected, research results actually documenting some of them are discussed later in this synthesis.

Advantages to an Integrated Approach

Just as high schools are often justly criticized by students for compartmentalizing instruction—50 minutes of history, followed by algebra and then physical education, for example—so, too, do community-based learning programs sometimes focus too narrowly on outcomes immediately related to their funding. From an individual young person's perspective, it makes no sense to learn only leadership skills from the Boy Scouts, career development from a career exploration at a local company, and service-learning from a separate class that has students visiting residents in a nursing home. Fragmentation is undesirable whether it occurs in the school, a business, or a family.

A more integrated alternative can be found in certain mentorship approaches where a young person gets to know and trust an adult. The student might gain career knowledge by shadowing the mentor in his or her company. He or she might apply business management skills by accompanying the mentor into management meetings (where the student is expected to contribute to a problem-solving discussion and perhaps write a report that can be shared with the English teacher on how communications problems were identified and solved). The young person could also accompany and assist the mentor as he or she takes two hours from work each week to serve as a volunteer tutor in an inner-city elementary school.

From an organizational perspective, too, it is satisfying to combine outcomes of community-based learning. Businesses are often overwhelmed by frequent requests from schools to engage in many diverse activities—furnishing speakers, providing job shadowing, supervising a teacher or student intern, and volunteering time to tutor students in math. An alternative is to design ways that a business or other community organization can combine efforts. For example, while students are at a hospital to perform service-learning, they might also hear about the variety of occupations at the hospital, and do a science project in one of the laboratories.

Barriers to Community-Based Learning

With all that we know about the benefits of community-based learning, why has it affected relatively few educators and students, rather than becoming a mainstay of America's educational reform?

From an ideological perspective, many educators still maintain an older paradigm of education, in which its purpose is to impart to students the content knowledge possessed by the teacher. In such a paradigm there is no need for input from students about what is to be learned, when, where, or how. The teacher maintains control in directing education, and students are tested to determine the extent to which they have remembered what was taught. Under the new paradigm, teachers need to function more in the role of coach and mentor.

A second ideological barrier is the perception of many school and community people that the subject matter content they learned in school should serve as the driving force in what is taught today. Failing to recognize or acknowledge the importance of applying knowledge to real-world issues, they see community-based learning as drawing students' time and attention away from the traditional curriculum content.

From a practical perspective, community-based learning requires commitment from the top as well as from dedicated teachers. Community-based learning requires time, effort, and expense. Time is needed to allow teachers to work individually with students in identifying and planning learning objectives, in arranging for involvement of community sites, and in helping students reflect on their experiences. Other practical considerations include liability coverage for times when students are outside the school building, transportation issues, and the need to schedule blocks of time so as to allow students sufficient time to get to and from their learning sites as well as to become active there. Orientation and training of both educators and community mentors are also essential.

It is necessary to spend time in creating an awareness among students, parents, educators, and community members of the purposes of community-based learning so that they don't see it as simply releasing students into the community without clear expectations of what is to occur. A final problem is the difficulty of effectively evaluating what is learned from student's experiences in community-based learning. This assessment is complicated by the fact that different students may be at the same learning site for different purposes, and that some community-based learning outcomes (identified in the prior section) are difficult to measure.

The Research Literature on Community-Based Learning

Much of the research on community-based learning has focused on individual programs and has assessed outcomes without a clear understanding of the elements that underlie a quality community-based learning experience. Just as students can fall asleep in their history class, so, too, can they waste time at a job site; not all workplace experiences lead to productive learning. This review of the literature first discusses the characteristics and quality of learning processes and then moves to attempts to document outcomes. We identify barriers faced in conducting quality research on community-based learning and describe some promising directions for the future.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH- QUALITY LEARNING PROGRAMS AND EXPERIENCES

One attempt to identify common characteristics of programs classified under the broad heading of School-to-Work was made by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education in its publication, *Research on School-to-Work Transition Programs in the United States*. The researchers identified fourteen features and determined the relative frequency of these features in six programs: Cooperative Education, School-Based Enterprise, Tech Prep, School-to-Apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, and Career Academies. The fourteen features were: 1) structured work-based learning while in school, 2) school curriculum that builds on work experience, 3) paid work experience, 4) employer-provided financial support, 5) program-arranged student work placement, 6) employer involvement in curriculum design, 7) integrated vocational and academic curriculum, 8) formal links to postsecondary education, 9) employment/college counseling, 10) pre-11th grade academic preparation, 11) pre-11th grade career exploration, 12) targeting of at-risk or non-college bound students, (13) use of outside mentors, and 14) occupational certification (Stern, et al. 1994, p. 8).

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory staff conducted a study of over 1,000 EBCE students in 24 states to determine young people's perceptions of what characteristics of a worksite are important for quality learning (Owens 1982). In addition to open-ended questions about their experiences at learning sites, students were asked to rate the importance of each of 19 characteristics in contributing to an excellent learning opportunity. At worksites judged by students as providing rich learning experiences, they

- More often learned job-specific skills including use of tools or equipment and gained specific knowledge of how the job operates through hands-on experiences
- More often described the people they worked with as helpful and friendly
- Generally worked closely with more than one person and formed a personal relationship with at least one person with whom they worked
- Reported completing tasks (judged by outside consultants) to have high or moderate levels of responsibility and were perceived to be challenging. (Owens 1982, pp. 89-90)

At a broader level, Goldberger, Kazis and O'Flanagan (1994) have identified characteristics of high-quality environments that provide structure and support for young people. They found that such worksite learning requires the following:

- Partners formally agree on the goals of the work-based program and how to achieve them.
- Student learning at the workplace progresses according to a structured plan.
- Work-based experiences promote the development of broad, transferable skills.
- School-based activities help students distill and deepen lessons of work experience.
- The program prepares students to enter the workplace.
- Ongoing support and counseling is provided for students.
- Orientation, training, and ongoing support to worksite and school staff are provided.
- Administrative structures exist to coordinate and manage the worksite component.
- Mechanisms are in place to assure the quality of students' work-based learning experiences.

Research conducted by staff at the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research has identified five key opportunities and supports needed to achieve desirable youth outcomes:

- Opportunities for active and self-directed learning
- Opportunities to take on new roles and responsibilities
- Ongoing emotional support from adults and peers
- Ongoing motivational support and high standards from adults, and
- Ongoing access to strategic support and social networks (Zeldin 1995, p. 10-11)

In the past, practitioners involved in community-based learning were often not interested in participating in program evaluation and sometimes saw it as interfering with students' progress. This attitude seems to have changed in recent years, as evaluation has shifted in emphasis toward continuous quality improvement, and as educators have become more sensitive to the needs of legislators and the public for accountability.

Other barriers to effective research and evaluation of community-based learning have been the lack of a definition and theoretical framework for much of the evaluation, differences in the quality and intensity of programs labeled School-to-Work or service-learning, the difficulty of measuring some of the skills and affective outcomes of community-based learning, and the confusion about how each program or practice may contribute to total educational reform.

LEARNER OUTCOMES

One of the earliest and most intensively evaluated School-to-Work programs has been Experience-Based Career Education. Bucknam and Brand (1983) conducted a meta-analysis of 80 evaluations of EBCE programs. They start by distinguishing EBCE from traditional work/education programs. In contrast to other programs, EBCE was found to: 1) use planned experience as a basis for learning academic subjects; 2) include career exploration and multiple employer/community site utilization as opposed to job experience at a single site; 3) expect students to take a greater role in shaping their personalized educational plans; 4) be appropriate for and used with all types of students; and 5) use community worksites for learning rather than for production purposes, so students earn academic credit rather than pay.

In terms of student learning outcomes, Bucknam and Brand found positive academic gains in 376 of 558 test administrations, including 112 where the differences were significantly positive. When compared to similar students not in EBCE, students in EBCE scored significantly higher in career-related skills, life skills, and in academic skills.

A comprehensive evaluation of the four EBCE demonstration sites was conducted over a several-year period by Educational Testing Service. This evaluation involved use of standardized tests, in-depth interviews of EBCE and control group students, survey questionnaires, and ethnographic studies by trained anthropologists. They found that EBCE students, in contrast to a control group:

- Have a knowledge of a greater number of career areas
- Know more of the personal and school-related characteristics and abilities that are necessary for entry into careers of interest
- Are more positive in their attitudes toward career planning
- Are better able to respond orally to interviewers' complex questions, and
- Had no greater gains in basic skills as measured by a standardized test (Owens 1982)

The NCRVE study of School-to-Work programs (Stern, et al. 1994) found that participation in cooperative education was associated with more positive attitudes toward school and a stronger perceived connection between school and work, but no consistent association between participation in cooperative education and subsequent success in the labor market.

The study of cooperative education by the Office of Technology Assessment (1995) found that programs nominated as being of high quality had

> participation by employers who are willing to provide training in occupations with promising career paths, screening of applicants to assure that they are prepared to meet employers' expectations, training plans with ambitious and specific learning objectives, and, for high school students, close monitoring of the worksite activities by school representatives (p. 68).

When service-learning is not mandated, the outcomes on students are generally positive. For example, Krug (1991) found significant differences in self-esteem and attitudes toward the school and community between high school students involved in a school-sponsored service-learning experience and those not involved.

Shumer (1994), in studying a community-based Job Training Partnership Act program for high school students, found that learning in the community improved attendance and school grades. This was facilitated especially by the use of adults and college students in helping students to learn.

Some of the most comprehensive evaluation of service-learning (commonly called "experiential education" in the 1980s) was conducted by Conrad and Hedin at the University of Minnesota. Their study involved 4,000 students in 33 programs and included comparison group students. The programs included volunteer service, political and social action, outdoor adventure, internships in government and business, and research in the community. The opportunities to act autonomously and to develop collegial relationships with adults were the two most powerful predictors of personal growth. In their review of others' research findings, Conrad and Hedin (1989) found that service-learning generally increases students' sense of personal and social responsibility, more positive attitudes toward adults and toward those served, enhanced self-esteem, growth in moral and ego development, and complex patterns of thought.

The research literature on required community service is mixed and generally fails to support requiring high school students to participate in it. For example, Crossman (1989) found that required community service did not produce as much improvement as voluntary service. Patterson (1987) found, in fact, that while fewer than 20 hours of required service had little impact, required participation for more than 20 hours may have a negative impact on the process of self-actualization. On the other hand, Giles and Eyler (1994) found that a required service-learning experience of limited intensity and duration has a positive impact on the development of college students: they showed a significant increase in their belief that people can make a difference, that they should be involved in community service, and in their commitment to perform volunteer service the following semester.

Systemic Approach to Community-Based Learning

A new movement has emerged recently to examine the similarities and differences between service-learning and School-to-Work and to focus on linkages. At a conference conducted in June 1995 and titled School Improvement: Strategies for Connecting Schools and Communities, the Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, and Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National Service, Eli Segal, signed a formal agreement to work together to link service-learning and School-to-Work. The conference was attended by state teams representing both sectors.

The Council of Chief State Schools Officers, in a 1994 memorandum, presented commonalties and a rationale for linking School-to-Work and service-learning. As quoted from Bhaerman (1995),

> Both provide environments in which students can develop various skills and competencies including those identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skill (SCANS) that are important for employment and responsible citizenship; both provide students with meaningful roles in their communities; and both foster collaboration between educators and community groups. The memorandum also presents several rationales for linking the two methodologies including the following: both have the potential to address such weaknesses as the lack of relevance of the curriculum or school experience; both can motivate students to want to learn; both can build community partnerships; and both focus on outcomes as a measure of acquired skills and knowledge. Service learning can help address issues of "scale and access" in school-to-work transition....Combining the approaches in a "learning continuum" can provide even primary grade students with opportunities to develop generic work skills at an early age (p. 2).

Service-learning also has an appeal to many parents and community groups, is relatively easy to start, and covers areas of a curriculum such as civics and government generally not addressed by School-to-Work. On the other hand, School-to-Work offers good links in the curriculum between academic and vocational education, presents a model for a four- or six-year curriculum sequence, stresses documentation of skills gained and transportable credentials, builds in adult mentorship, and has good support from the business community. By linking service-learning, School-to-Work and other forms of community-based learning, educators can build a much stronger rationale for the use of the community for learning and broaden their community support base.

Conclusions and Future Directions

This topical synthesis paper has integrated a great deal of current literature related to contextual learning theory and its application in community-based learning. While the research base on essential components of high-quality learning in the community is moderate, research to prove the validity of outcomes expected from community-based learning is still weak. New strategies, such as the application of cost-benefit analysis to service-learning, are emerging that can complement some of the qualitative research and provide support to those needing to justify the costs of such programs.

Although there are many programs that could be labeled community-based learning, few educators have yet used this term or started to sell community-based learning as a broad set of strategies to enhance educational reform. Likewise, many of the programs called service-learning or School-to-Work are very fragmented, and students often receive only minimal exposure to the array of learning potential that exists in the community. Similarly, very few community-based learning programs come close to systematically using the principles described in this synthesis for quality contextual learning.

New efforts have been implemented recently to place educators in the community for their own learning to identify workplace applications for the subjects they teach. In some cases, companies like The Boeing Company in Seattle have provided slots for secondary and postsecondary teachers to explore worksites for the summer and to prepare lesson plans based on their new learning (Owens and Wang 1994). In other cases, teams of academic and vocational teachers have been prepared to visit companies and community agencies to identify applications of work-based tasks related to their school subject content (Stone-Ewing 1995). Educators have also accepted invitations from businesses and community agencies, including government, to participate in training in areas such as continuous quality improvement.

The examples and issues discussed in this synthesis have focused on student learning in the community. However, it is important for educators to keep abreast of workforce training that is taking place for existing workers. Such training costs billions of dollars annually. Simulations, group problem solving, and other strategies are being used effectively in many industries and may have applications for public education.

Another element related to educational reform is the transformation of some businesses into "learning organizations." Although originating in business and industry, the learning organization concept is starting to be applied in some schools, with all staff and students working in open and supportive learning environments. Drucker (1995) has written recently about the societal transformation to learning communities taking place throughout the world.

If community-based learning is to contribute its full potential to school and educational improvement, the following five changes appear needed:

1. Staff involved in School-to-Work, service-learning and other forms of community-based learning will need to collaborate with each other to present a unified message to educators and the community that there are diverse and purposeful roles community members can play in helping young people learn and mature.

2. The research on contextual learning will need to be studied more closely by educators, so that they can develop and operate community-based learning efforts that are of high quality and likely to produce significant results in students.

3. Focused research is needed on student outcomes of community-based learning programs and efforts that are based on the contextual research literature. This research needs to be implemented on a multi-year basis since the outcomes expected seldom occur in a single year.

4. Educators will continue to need greater inservice and preservice training in identifying specific ways their subject content is being used in community settings or what new content should be infused into their courses to make them more relevant to the real world. They will also need training on the philosophy and methodology to support community-based learning so as to make it an integral part of their total educational program.

5. Practitioners involved in separate School-to-Work, service-learning, and youth development programs need to come together to identify common ground, share their expertise, and learn from each other's efforts.

Legislators and policy makers also have a major role to play in fostering integration of community-based learning by broadening the scope of expected outcomes. Michele Cahill (1993), in reporting the consensus of the New York City Youth Employment Consortium, stated,

> For programs to be effective in positioning participants on pathways to success they have to go beyond a narrow focus on acquisition of job skills or even behavioral changes... Youth must meet needs and build competencies in many areas of their lives at the same time as they are acquiring vocational skill (Cited by Zeldin 1995, p. 9).

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Distinguishes between apprenticeship as a paradigm for learning and as the optimal location for learning. In discussing where apprenticeships should be located—the workplace or the school—Berryman identifies four criteria in the form of questions that can be applied to help decide the appropriate location for learning.

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Goldberger, S.; Kazis, R.; and O'Flanagan, M. *Learning Through Work: Designing and Implementing Quality Worksite Learning for High School Students*. New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1994 (ED 369 940).

Describes a school-to-career model that balances education and employment/career goals. Outlines a high school reform agenda that integrates abstract and practical learning and includes all students; discusses the important role of work-based learning and the need for secondary and postsecondary integration.

Grubb, W. N. *Education Through Occupations in American High Schools Vol. 1, Approaches to Integrating Academic and Vocational Education*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1995.

Discusses the background of efforts to integrate academic and vocational education, a description of eight approaches to integration (with particular attention to the academy model, career pathways, magnet schools, and senior projects), and the pedagogy of curriculum integration. The new pedagogy is especially geared to teaching problem solving, higher-order reasoning, and teamwork skills—which are all being demanded by today's employers.

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Identifies the commonalties and differences between School-to-Work and Youth Development, which provide a foundation for collaboration between the two to better prepare young people for work. With shared resources and expertise, School-to-Work and Youth Development can serve as a joint voice on current policy debates and strengthen communities and programs for young people.

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New Directions in Parent Involvement

by Norm Fruchter, Anne Galletta, and J. Lynne White

This study posits new directions in parent involvement emerging in school districts across the country. It identifies and analyzes eighteen recently developed programs or reforms stressing effective parental involvement. The objectives of this study are to

- identify, describe, and discuss primary examples of these new parent involvement efforts in each of four overarching categories;
- explore several hypotheses about why these efforts represent new directions for parent involvement.

This study is a policy analysis undertaken to contribute to continuing discussions about the role of parent involvement in improving student academic achievement, restructuring schools, and reforming public education, particularly in schools serving low-income and disadvantaged students. Several basic assumptions underlie the work:

- Effective parent involvement makes important contributions to student academic achievement.
- Existing forms of parent involvement often develop traditional and quite limited relationships between families and schools.
- When significant distance exists among the values, structure, and language of school culture and the home cultures of diverse class, racial, and ethnic constituencies, traditional forms of parent involvement often fail to reduce that distance.
- New programs that succeed in reducing that distance hold significant promise for improving public education, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas.

Programs Assisting Parents of Preschool Children

The five programs profiled here provide support and educational opportunities for families and their preschool children. A number of these programs offer parenting education, literacy training and job preparation, and referrals to other resources or service providers. Some also provide early childhood education and monitor children's health needs; others stress intergenerational literacy and provide adult education and career training as well as parenting education and early childhood education for participants' children. All of these programs engage parents early in the process—some during the prenatal period, most while the children are infants. They emphasize the critical early years of child development and the primary role of parents in aiding and supporting that development.

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Many social and economic factors, particularly the steep rise in poverty among young families, created the pressure for these programs. The needs of immigrant families who may or may not speak English have also spurred demands for family support and parenting education. Factors such as alcohol and drug abuse, violence within families, and violence in communities have also increased the calls for family supports.

Past federal policies sought to provide poor children with early childhood education outside the home, to foster growth and development, and to prepare children for success in school. Evaluations of such programs indicate considerable effectiveness. The Perry Preschool study (Berrueta-Clement et al. 1984) found that among three- and four-year-old black children from poor families, high-quality preschool education improved their school success (for example, raising grades, reducing absences, decreasing the use of special education services), their likelihood of graduating from high school, and their chances of continuing their education or pursuing vocational training after completing high school.

The results of similar longitudinal studies of early childhood programs have received widening public attention as business and industry, foundations, the media, and policymakers have pressed for more preventive programs for children and families. Often, the positive findings of these studies are compared to the cost of remediation or to the rising social welfare costs generated by children who did not receive early education intervention. This increased public stress on the need for preventive programs coincides with expanding the role of states in policy education and social services and has helped to support the development of these new family programs (Weiss 1990).

Concerns about the feminization of poverty have contributed to new programs for single mothers. The Intergenerational Literacy Action Research Project examined the effects of community-based women's education and job training programs on participants' children because these programs were designed to transfer skills from low-income mothers to their children. Of 463 participants in the nine programs surveyed, 450 reported increased involvement in their children's schoolwork and their children's school. Case studies of a smaller cohort of program participants indicated that teachers reported improvement in at least one area of school performance for 68.9 percent of participants' children (Van Fossen and Sticht 1991).

Studies of oral and written language development in children indicate that literacy begins to develop at a young age, that young children are actively engaged in their own meaningful construction of language, and that literacy activities involving adults and children are crucial for a child's literacy development (Teale and Sulzby 1989). Studies exploring the connections among home, school, and community, particularly research demonstrating the importance of integrating those connections in children's learning experience, have also contributed to the development of programs to assist families of preschool children (Comer 1988; Epstein 1987). Finally, evidence suggests that intergenerational and family literacy programs successfully retain adult students (Heathington et al. 1984; Nickse, Speicher, and Bucheck 1988).

Funding for efforts to educate and support parents and their preschool children has increased over the last few years. Even Start, a new federal program designed to support improved educational opportunities for adults and children, funds projects that integrate adult and early childhood education. The goals of Even Start include helping parents become partners in the education of their children, assisting children in reaching their potential as learners, and providing basic education for their parents. Formative evaluation (Nickse 1990) suggests that such programs have demonstrated success sufficient to warrant further support.

Three of the programs described here—Parents as Teachers, the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and the Kenan Family Literacy Project—are large in scope and provide significant training and technical assistance to community-based agencies or school districts. The two others—the Center for Successful Child Development and the Family Readers Program—are more limited in scope. We chose these five programs because their program components, assumptions about families, and emphasis on empowerment exemplify the new directions in family support programs we see emerging across the country.

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a state-legislated program that Missouri makes available to parents of young children (birth through age three). School districts must either provide the program or contract out implementation to an appropriate local agency; parents of all income levels and all racial and ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to participate. The program features periodic home visits by a parent educator hired by the school district, who discusses child development and parenting skills with the family. It also organizes parenting workshops and other opportunities to exchange information throughout the year. Districts network with community agencies to provide referrals to families in need and attempt to reach out to those parents least likely to use program services. The PAT National Center, located at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, provides training and technical assistance and disseminates information about the program.

The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is designed for parents, mostly mothers, of four- and five-year-old children. HIPPY provides these mothers with a two-year curriculum, lesson plans, and materials to help them teach their children specific skills to increase their readiness to learn on entering kindergarten. The program employs paraprofessionals—neighborhood parents from each community—to visit participating families twice a month to explain the program and to review each session's lessons. During weeks the paraprofessionals do not visit, mothers meet together for discussions of lesson topics and related parenting issues; the paraprofessionals and the program coordinators also attend these meetings. HIPPY is designed to increase the mothers' self-esteem and to improve their children's cognitive abilities.

The Kenan Family Literacy Project incorporates early childhood education, parent education, parent basic skills preparation, parent employment training and counseling, and parent and child playtime. The program is often implemented in collaboration with public school districts and housed in school buildings. Parents and children arrive at school together and spend some time during the day for meals and "parent and child together" (PACT) time. Parents assist teachers or other school staff as part of their work experience. Other Kenan activities include an early childhood program (based on the High/Scope curriculum) and parents' basic skills education, usually in preparation for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Parents also participate in group discussions on parenting skills.

The Center for Successful Child Development (CSCD) is a program for expectant mothers and mothers of preschool children; it provides parenting education, prenatal health care, routine health care for infants and preschoolers, early child care education, and referral to other social service agencies. The program targets mothers living in six contiguous buildings in the Robert Taylor homes, a Chicago public housing project. CSCD is designed to integrate all the educational, health, and social services necessary to help parents ensure their children's healthy development and academic success.

Program components include home visits, in which parent-child advocates assess families' basic needs and discuss child development issues; a primary health care facility for mothers' prenatal care and families' basic health care; a family drop-in center, which provides structured and informal activities for parents; an infant and toddler day-care center; and a Head Start "wraparound" program providing full-day, full-year early childhood education. CSCD, like HIPPY, employs community members—the parent-child advocates—to enroll pregnant women in the program, make home visits, and staff both the family drop-in center and the infant-toddler day-care center. The program is also known as the Beethoven Project because of its affiliation with Beethoven Elementary School; the target buildings are within the Beethoven School's attendance zone.

The Family Readers Program, formerly the Parent Readers Program, helps community college students improve their skills by reading to their children. The program offers several workshops focusing on children's literature and specific strategies designed to help children understand and appreciate that literature. Workshops discuss the experience of this shared reading and students' use of similar strategies to improve their own reading. The workshop series is offered as an alternative to a developmental reading course required for students who score below the passing level on the college's reading test.

Programs Involving Parents in Their Children's Education at Home and at School

Two decades of research have provided substantial evidence that children's academic achievement is linked to their parents' involvement in their education. Recent major study findings renew this stress on family involvement, demonstrating that school reformers must address, and work to improve, relationships between home and school. Rich (1985) summarizes the issue:

> It is instinctively understood that family involvement in education is important, and a great deal is known about that importance. As a concept it is greatly praised. However, little use has been made of the research findings that affirm the importance. Schools have not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of today's families; and teachers have received little, if any, help and training in working with families. And families have not taken or been asked to take sufficient responsibility in their role as partners with the school or in the education of their children. (pp. 5-6)

Research has identified three interconnected areas in which family-school involvement has important impacts, regardless of families' economic level or ethnic and cultural background. First, focusing support on the home helps parents create a family environment that aids student achievement; such focus can extend academic learning and reinforce behaviors taught at school. Second, strengthening parents' linkages to schools can produce important and demonstrable learning gains for children. Third, focusing on schools' critical role in creating strategies and structures for involvement helps make parents powerful partners in their children's education.

Much recent work, particularly that of Joyce Epstein, demonstrates that supportive home environments help children succeed in school in two ways:

- Children work successfully toward goals and values when they recognize that the attitudes and expectations of both home and school overlap.
- Children's academic achievement improves when families demonstrate their connection to school goals by encouraging their children's intellectual development, studying with them, showing approval of school activities, and respecting their children's efforts.

Children's growth and development benefit from a sense of partnership between the parent and school. Parents provide the continuity that children need to succeed as they progress through the education system and help to integrate children's experience at home, in school, and in the community.

Epstein's research demonstrates that parents who are involved in school activities are more likely than others to have positive views of teachers. These parents give higher ratings to teachers' interpersonal skills and professional abilities and express greater appreciation for teachers' efforts on behalf of their children. They report greater confidence in the school's ability to provide a positive learning environment. These endorsements of teachers and schools translate into stronger parental support for curriculum development, teacher benefits, and school funding.

Parents' level and quality of involvement are linked directly to specific school practices. When schools develop strong involvement programs, parents are more supportive of their children's learning at school and at home. Parents who lack knowledge of school practices and programs, particularly low-income and disadvantaged parents, do not lack interest in the schools their children attend. Often, their schools have failed to develop appropriate strategies for involving them. Epstein's research indicates that when schools don't involve parents, parent education and family social class help determine who gets involved. But social class and education level tend to become less important factors when schools commit themselves to parent involvement and work to improve it.

Several major approaches to developing meaningful parental involvement stress the necessity to involve all parents and to reduce the barriers of race and class. One approach uses the concept of ecology to describe how families function in an interdependent world. Children, this approach argues, are linked to family, neighborhood, community, and school; each influences and is influenced by the other. Consequently, in this framework, neither parents, schools, nor communities bear the sole responsibility for children's academic success. Conversely, none working in isolation from the others can ensure children's success.

A second concept, the nondeficit approach, challenges the assumption that families of low-income or disadvantaged children are deficient and insists that schools respect the assets and strengths that all families bring to their children's learning. Empowerment is a related process through which parents become active participants, rather than passive clients, in helping to structure their children's learning environments at home and at school. Finally, the concept of collaboration implies that schools alone cannot provide all the services that families need.

Many families, particularly low-income and disadvantaged families, face considerable barriers when they attempt to collaborate with schools. Research has consistently identified a number of such barriers to involvement:

- Low-income and minority families are often geographically, culturally, and psychologically distant from schools.
- Parents face extraordinary demands on time and energy as they struggle to meet their family's needs.
- Teachers lack the training to work collaboratively with families.
- Race and class biases have traditionally shaped, and limited, the culture of schools.

The programs profiled here have recognized and attempted to overcome these barriers through the development of new outreach components. Both past and current research has indicated that all five programs hope to reproduce the benefits of parent involvement: increased academic achievement, improved student motivation, more regular school attendance, reduced dropout rates, and increased family and community support for schools.

The TransParent School Model focuses on removing barriers to family and school interaction caused by limitations in parents' time, skills, and information.

The program provides daily two-way communication between teachers and parents, using the telephone as the primary link between home and school. Parents dial a special school number that provides a recorded message informing them of classroom and school activities. They can also receive targeted electronic messages about their own children's accomplishments and can leave messages detailing their reactions and concerns.

This program was developed at the Betty Phillips Center for Parenthood Education at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University, in 1987. The first demonstration site was the Academy for Academics and Arts, a K-8 magnet school in Huntsville, Alabama. A second pilot program was initiated in 1989 at the Carter Lawrence Middle School in Nashville, Tennessee. At the beginning of the 1990-91 school year, the Trans-Parent School Model was operating in thirty-six locations in eight states, serving Head Start programs as well as elementary and middle schools. All sites are urban facilities serving primarily low-income and minority students.

Funding and technical assistance for the Trans-Parent School Model originally came from the Bell-South Foundation and Central Bell. Support is now available from public funds as well as from parent-teacher groups, foundations, and businesses.

The Family Study Institute program assumes that parents powerfully influence their children's motivation and academic achievement. The program offers two parent education courses to be implemented by elementary schools. The courses help parents create home environments that encourage good study habits, parent-child communication about school-related activities, and family reading. Each course consists of three weekly group sessions at school, supplemented by assigned weekly activities for parents at home. Volunteer parents function as group leaders, guiding small groups of other parents through curriculum materials and home learning activities.

The courses were developed in the mid-1980s by the Academic Development Institute, a Chicago-based nonprofit organization. With support from private foundations, the courses were piloted in forty-five Chicago elementary schools in low-income and minority neighborhoods. The courses are not targeted, however, for particular types of schools.

Family Math and Science Programs provide joint classes for parents and children in problem solving and hands-on mathematics and science activities to reinforce school curriculum through home-based learning activities. Weekly classes, taught by specially trained teachers and parents, take place across six-week cycles in both school and community settings. The programs were developed to address the lack of interest and limited abilities in math and science among female and minority students and the resulting underrepresentation of these groups in post-secondary education programs and professional careers such as science and engineering.

The Family Math Program was developed in 1981 at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkeley, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Classes began in 1982 and quickly spread through concerted training efforts to sites across the country. In 1988, the National Science Foundation provided funding for the dissemination of the Family Math Program by five minority community-based organizations. That same year, Northwest Equals at Portland State University initiated the companion Family Science Program with a grant from the Chevron Corporation.

The Megaskills Program engages parents and community volunteers to help children acquire, at home, skills and attitudes, such as problem solving and teamwork, that are linked to successful school performance. Parents and community leaders are trained in a series of eight highly structured workshops. Limited technical assistance and support are available subsequently from the program.

These workshops were developed in 1989 by the Home and School Institute, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit educational organization founded in 1964 to provide programs and resources to support families' educational roles. The MacArthur Foundation provided initial funding for the Megaskills Program.

The Quality Education Project (QEP) was initiated in 1982 in California as a nonprofit organization to mobilize support for education among parents of low-income and minority students. The project evolved into a highly structured school-based program that seeks to improve home-school communications, build family support for schools, develop parent education to encourage parent-child interaction, and encourage home learning activities to enable parents to reinforce skills learned at school. The program includes trained site coordinators, staff development, parent training, resource materials, and intensive technical assistance to school personnel.

Initial support came from foundation grants and federal and state education funds to California school districts. Additional foundation support has enabled the elementary school program to expand to other states; this support has also underwritten development of middle and high school pilot sites.

School Improvement Programs

The school improvement programs profiled in this section developed from the effective schools research movement of the 1970s and subsequent efforts to implement the findings of that research in school districts throughout the country. Effective schools research attacked the conviction that "schools can't make a difference" in low student academic achievement supposedly caused by family background. To counter this position, researchers identified schools serving poor and minority students that produced superior academic results and analyzed the characteristics of these effective schools that seemed to correlate with academic success. Implementation projects then attempted to use these correlates of effectiveness to assess and improve ineffective schools.

Parent involvement was originally not one of the correlates of effectiveness. Ronald Edmonds, perhaps the most influential effective-schools researcher, identified and popularized five factors critical to school effectiveness: strong leadership, unified vision, high expectations, instruction tied to assessment, and a positive school climate. Edmonds initially discounted parent involvement because his research did not identify it as one of the stronger factors associated with school effectiveness. He also argued that including parent involvement risked reducing schools' responsibility to educate all children. Because Edmonds perceived parent involvement as essentially beyond the control of schools, his opposition to defining it as a critical factor was an effort to focus effective schools research, and practice, on those factors that schooling could affect (Edmonds 1979).

Debate about the relative importance of parent involvement intensified as the influence of effective schools research spread. But as school improvement projects attempted to apply research results in ineffective schools, the debate was resolved in practice by the inclusion of parents. Most projects based on effective schools research developed a cycle of needs assessment, planning, and implementation to generate school improvement and created school-based teams to carry out these processes. Parents were included on most of these teams to ensure support from all of the school's constituencies in the improvement effort.

Yet such school improvement programs often included parents in symbolic, arbitrary, and limited ways. Although state legislatures (for example, in California and Florida) or large city school districts (for example, in Milwaukee, Chicago, New York, and Detroit) mandated programs, formal processes for selecting parent representation were seldom developed. Instead, parents included on school improvement teams were frequently selected by administrators, were rarely chosen by the school's parent body, and were often significantly outnumbered, manipulated, and intimidated by the school staff. Parent presence, therefore, often produced only passive assent to, rather than active participation in, team decision making (Kelley 1988).

Nevertheless, the school improvement programs that developed from effective schools research are the precursors of the programs profiled here. Those efforts contributed the following emphases to current programs:

- a focus on ineffective schools serving poor minority students as the critical targets for school improvement efforts;
- an insistence that all students can learn and that excuses for schooling failure based on student background limitations are unacceptable;
- an understanding that the whole school, seen as an ensemble within which a range of critical factors interlock to encourage or depress student achievement, must be the target for change;
- an assumption that such change involves processes developing over time;
- an assumption that the entire school constituency, including parents, must be involved in these processes.

Perhaps the most significant change is that current programs define parents as critical participants.

The school improvement programs described below stress the necessity to involve parents in principal roles in school restructuring and improvement. The School Development Program, generated by James Comer and his colleagues at Yale University's Child Study Center, was initiated in New Haven in 1968 to improve academic achievement in two poorly performing city schools. For the past 24 years, Comer and his colleagues have been refining this comprehensive program to reduce the social and cultural distance between home, community, and school and to support children's social and academic development through the extensive participation of parents in both governance and developmental roles.

The Accelerated Schools Project, developed by Henry Levin and his colleagues at the Center for Education Research at Stanford University, got under way in 1986 in two California elementary schools. Developed as an alternative to traditional forms of remediation, Accelerated Schools stresses the need to advance and enrich the education of disadvantaged students and sets as its overall goal the achievement of educational parity—grade-level performance—by these students on graduation from elementary or middle school. The program emphasizes implementing through collaborative processes, significant changes in each school's curriculum, instructional methods, and school organization. Parents play key roles through their participation on schoolwide governance teams and task-oriented subcommittees.

The League of Schools Reaching Out, developed by Don Davies and his colleagues at the Institute for Responsive Education at Boston University, began as a pilot project in a Boston and a New York City elementary school in 1987. The project's precursor was a three-city study (Boston, Liverpool, and Lisbon) of the relationship between public schools and low-income parent constituents. The study found strong parent commitment to supporting children's education, significant barriers to effective home-school communication and cooperation, and consistent failure to effectively educate all children when schools maintained such barriers. From this study came the league's commitment to develop strong partnerships among home, school, and community as a primary route to school improvement.

The Center for Collaborative Education is a New York City network of innovative schools; at its core is the group of Central Park East schools developed by Deborah Meier and her colleagues over the past two decades. These are staff- and parent-run public schools serving predominantly poor and minority students. School organization emphasizes choice, active learning, collaborative and interdisciplinary teaching, alternative assessment, multicultural curricula, and a focus on individualized instruction that strives to eliminate tracking and other discriminations among students. Parents play key roles on school governance teams that decide policy in all areas. The center is the New York City affiliate of the Coalition of Essential Schools, developed by Ted Sizer and his colleagues at Brown University.

Governance Reforms

The major governance reforms profiled in this section originated in three movements—the community control struggles of the 1960s, the school-based management reforms of the 1970s, and more recent campaigns to reform state school finance systems.

Community control struggles developed from the civil rights movement's efforts to improve schooling for black and Latino children. Community control advocates attacked educational bureaucracies in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, and other major American cities as perpetrators of school failure and demanded governance changes to make public schools directly accountable to the parents and communities whose children used them. Their explicit demands were for decentralization of power—that is, both the dismantling of centralized bureaucracies and the relocation of decision-making authority to the school and community level.

What resulted, particularly in New York City and Detroit, were forms of administrative decentralization that moved some decision-making power to neighborhood school boards, thereby creating new arenas for political struggle. But these compromises reserved significant centralized power over fiscal allocation and control, personnel credentialing, hiring, and staff assignment as well as curriculum and staff development. The subsequent history of school politics in New York City, for example, has been a frustrating struggle, by parents and community activists against the forces of recentralization, increasing teacher union power, political interference, and local corruption, to make this limited form of decentralization work.

This process of testing the limits of administrative decentralization has generated renewed demands for genuine decision making at school and community levels.

Among the initiators of the school-based management movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s were state legislatures concerned to improve academic achievement, particularly in poor and minority districts. Facing the need to upgrade schooling, and focusing on major disparities in resource inputs and academic outcomes between white advantaged and minority disadvantaged districts, legislators in several states passed statutes decentralizing some decision making to parents at the school level. In 1973, Florida's legislature enacted a tripartite program of funding equalization, decentralization of decision making, and increased parent and citizen participation. Additional 1979 legislation granted allocations to the local school governance committees formed throughout the state in response to the 1973 program. Several counties, particularly Monroe in Key West, have developed comprehensive and innovative programs implementing these legislative mandates.

California's school-based management initiative introduced a limited form of decentralization—a school council to develop, carry out, and oversee state grant allocations for school improvement efforts. These councils included teachers, parents, and administrators; the enabling legislation required that they include equal numbers of school staff and parents. The state education department provided training for the councils as well as technical assistance and program monitoring (Clark 1979; Marburger 1985).

Statewide school finance reform to reduce significant disparities in education expenditures per pupil, particularly in poor districts serving disadvantaged students, generated considerable foundation support during the 1970s. Two key state finance suits, *Robinson v. Cahill* in New Jersey and *Serrano v. Priest* in California, established state responsibility for school finance equity when state constitutions included appropriate equity language. But the *Rodriguez v. San Antonio* case in Texas denied equity advocates a federal remedy, because the U.S. Supreme Court held that education is not a fundamental right under the Constitution.

Since *Rodriguez*, in 1973, equity challenges brought in state court suits have forced revision of school finance systems in Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. In several states, the courts also called for broad reorganization to lessen the disparities in schooling outcomes between richer and poorer districts. As in Kentucky, significant governance reforms were sometimes included in this statewide school restructuring (Berne 1988).

The four broad governance reforms reviewed here all create significant decentralized decision making and stress parents as important participants in school-level decision processes. Because each reform uses different terms, some common definitions may prove useful. We use *school-based management* to mean locating the power to make decisions about budget, personnel, school organization, and curriculum at the school level. We use *shared decision making* to mean how the varying school constituencies—administrators, teachers, other school staff, parents, and community—participate in the process of school-level decision making.

Kentucky's reform gives considerable decision-making authority to a local school council of teachers, parents, and principal but keeps significant power at district levels and maintains local school boards as policy arbiters. Power over staff and principal hiring, curriculum (within state guidelines), and instructional organization is given to the school control, but budget decisions are split between the council and district, with the latter maintaining significant control over allocations to schools. Rather than developing school-based budgeting, Kentucky's reform assigns a proportional share of each school's allocation to the local council and provides additional state-generated discretionary funds for the council's use. The reform gives the state education department increased powers to develop performance standards, assess school progress, reward improving schools, and sanction (and ultimately close) failing schools.

For Chicago's 540 schools, the comprehensive state reform legislation codified both the decisions to be made at the school level and who is to participate in making those decisions. The legislation also significantly reduced the power of the citywide board of education. Chicago's reform transforms local school councils into mini school boards with parent majorities and gives these councils critical authority over school leadership through their power to hire and terminate school principals. (It gives principals, however, sole and expanded power to hire school staff.) The councils also have considerable power over local discretionary school funds. Chicago's reform lodges authority over curriculum with a Professional Personnel Advisory Committee composed primarily of teachers.

In Los Angeles, a process of shared decision making was introduced to all of the system's schools, and a school-based management initiative was offered as a pilot program to 70 schools through a competitive proposal process. The local school leadership councils managed, for every school, to have sizable teacher majorities and limited parent participation; they also have limited authority. Councils can determine some marginal school expenditures, but have no power over major budget allocations, personnel decisions, instructional organization, or curriculum policy. The school-based management initiative is essentially a school improvement program with no real authority over budget, personnel, school organization, or curriculum. The only significant gain in the latter initiative is the ability to request waivers from systemwide regulations and procedures.

Dade County, Florida developed a pilot program for thirty-two schools, combining strong school-based management with weak shared decision making. Dade's effort creates governing councils at each school with significant power over budget, personnel, school organization, and curriculum, as well as the right to request waivers from district and state rules, regulations, and contractual requirements. Because the reform is nonprescriptive regarding the processes of shared decision making, however, teachers dominate the councils and parents have limited power.

Conclusion

Almost all of the eighteen programs examined in this report are new interventions into schooling, developed during the last decade. The ten highlighted in the first two sections of this article were initiated to help parents support their children's development, increase their children's learning capacity, and improve their children's school performance. The eight analyzed in the previous two sections define parent involvement as a central focus of school improvement or governance reforms.

Of the ten programs focusing directly on working with parents to improve their children's academic capacity, four target low-income and disadvantaged families. The CSCD is located in one of the poorest census districts in the country, and HIPPY usually selects low-income neighborhoods as program sites. Both the Kenan Family Literacy Project and the Family Readers Program also tend to choose program sites in low-income settings. Although Missouri's PAT Program is structured as a statewide universal effort, the program makes specific attempts to reach low-income and disadvantaged families.

The five programs that help parents of school age students support their children's learning are all structured as universal programs rather than targeted to specific constituencies. Yet each has developed components to increase program effectiveness with low-income and disadvantaged parents. The Family Study Institute, Family Math and Science Programs, and Megaskills all recruit and train parents as teachers and trainers of other parents. Family Math and Science and Megaskills specifically recruit community leaders as teachers and also use local organizations such as churches and youth centers as sites for training sessions, to reduce the barriers that school-based programs often generate. QEP has thus far targeted most of its specific programs to low-income districts, and the TransParent School Model has ensured that evaluations of program effectiveness assess differences in parent usage across class or race.

The four comprehensive school improvement programs stressing parent involvement as a critical focus—the School Development Program, Accelerated Schools, the League of Schools Reaching Out, and the Center for Collaborative Education—target schools and districts serving low-income and disadvantaged students.

The four major governance reforms are universal programs seeking to involve parents in school decision making throughout one state and three large urban districts. Nevertheless, most of Kentucky's public school students come from less-than-affluent families, and the public schools in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Dade County serve predominantly low-income and minority constituencies.

Therefore, whether these eighteen programs specifically target low-income communities, shape program components to ensure receptivity to disadvantaged families, or attempt to be universal, their actual patterns of service are directed to predominantly low-income and disadvantaged families.

The four broad governance reforms all developed from a complex interplay of political, legislative, judicial, and constituency forces. No specific entity piloted or produced these reforms. But the other fourteen programs represent specific interventions by agents operating from outside local school systems. Of these programs, ten were developed by university faculty, most within research institutes or equivalent settings focusing on child development and schooling improvement. Of the other four, one (CSCI) was generated directly by a foundation committed to healthy youth development; two (Megaskills and QEP) were created by nonprofit organizations committed to improving the extent and quality of parent involvement in schooling; and one (the Center for Collaborative Education) is the outreach arm of a network of teacher-generated, learner-centered public schools.

Thus fourteen of the eighteen programs we have examined were initiated independently of school system authority, direction, or sponsorship. University or nonprofit origins provided the independence, flexibility, and resources to create the leverage necessary to intervene effectively at school and district levels as well as the clout required to maintain program integrity.

The four broad governance reforms are supported by public funds, through court-mandated new allocations, legislative reallocation, or district redirection of existing funds. In addition, significant foundation and corporate resources have supported Chicago's reform.

The other fourteen programs have been supported from their inception by a mix of federal funds from programs such as Even Start and JTPA, supplemented by state child-care and education allocations. Considerable foundation support has also helped sustain most of these programs. This mix of external public and private sector funding has allowed these programs to operate in local schools and districts without becoming dependent on district financial support. Moreover, the aggregate of public and private support provided to these programs represents a significant new investment in helping parents support their children's development, learning capacity, and public school performance.

The fourteen programs examined in the first three sections recognize that disparities between home and school cultures create difficulties for children's success in schooling and sustain barriers to effective parent involvement, and each has developed strategies to reduce those barriers. HIPPY and the CSCD, for example, recruit and train neighborhood parents as outreach workers. Family Math and Science and Megaskills locate programs in community organizations. The QEP translates all its materials into the languages of each constituency and hires local facilitators fluent in those languages. Both the School Development Program and the Center for Collaborative Education have developed specific governance structures through which parents shape children's developmental experiences or assessment strategies to reduce the gaps between home and school cultures.

In the new decision-making settings that the four broad governance reforms have created, many local school teams have addressed, and begun to narrow, the distances between home and school cultures that reduce student academic achievement and limit parent involvement. Because all of the programs reviewed in this report recognize, to some extent, the strengths rather than the deficits of the diverse families that make up the constituencies of public schooling, their strategies attempt to build on those strengths to make schools more flexible, responsive, and culturally sophisticated institutions.

All of these programs affirm the necessity to involve parents as active participants in, rather than as passive clients of, efforts to improve their children's learning capacities, schooling experience, and academic performance. Each program has developed specific strategies to empower parents. PAT, Kenan Family Literacy, and the CSCD, for example, all provide direct education to parents about the processes of child development. The Family Readers Program, the Family Study Institute, and Megaskills provide classes and workshops about how parents can most effectively support their children's school learning. All four of the school improvement programs define critical roles for parents in their school restructuring processes. Each of the four governance reforms define parents as key participants; in Kentucky's and Chicago's reforms, parents are indeed critical members of school governance teams, with considerable decision-making power over curriculum, budget personnel, and instructional organization.

Thus family empowerment—defined as providing the structures to help parents become active participants in shaping their children's development, learning capacity, and school experience—is a critical component of all these programs. Because most of these programs target schools and districts serving low-income and disadvantaged constituencies, it is possible that a new generation of parents, honed by their experience of active participation in shaping their children's schooling, will emerge to transform schools that have traditionally miseducated and underserved too many of our nation's children.

The eighteen programs highlighted in this report therefore share, in varying degrees, the following components, which represent new directions in parent involvement:

- a strong commitment to involve low-income and disadvantaged parents in activities ultimately aimed at improving student academic achievement;
- origins in universities or nonprofit institutions, with resulting sponsorship, implementation, and evaluation maintained by these external institutions;
- significant public sector support through funding from federal grants, state legislative allocation, or district buy-in as well as private sector support through foundations or corporate grants;
- a strong commitment to reduce the gap between home and school cultures by shaping program components to respond to, and build on, the values, structures, and languages of home cultures;
- a strong commitment to develop program components so that families are empowered by their participation.

Hopefully, these new directions will help sustain broad new parent constituencies in supporting their children's education and improving their children's schools. ■

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Norm Fruchter *is the program advisor for education at the Aaron Diamond Foundation and the president of Community School Board 15 in Brooklyn.* **Anne Galletta** *is a program officer at the Academy for Educational Development.* **J. Lynne White** *is a program officer at the Public Education Fund Network.* *This article is adapted from a book by the same title. The book is available for $12.95 (paper) from the Academy for Educational Development, c/o Marjorie Webster, 1255 23rd Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037.*

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QUESTIONS FOR SELF STUDY:

DO WE ENGAGE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS?

1. What is your school's methods for encouraging widespread participation of parents, community members and students?

2. What decisions are community members empowered to participate in? How many participate and with what level of enthusiasm? Does the community get involved in deciding crucial issues related to student achievement?

3. Have you collected any data in the last three years to determine the community's perception about their role in your school? What did that data tell you? Have you acted upon those findings?

4. Does the school have partnerships with local community organizations? How are those organizations or individuals involved in improving student learning? Do they have access to the important instructional work going on in the classroom?

5. How has the school linked to health and human service organizations? What has made those connections go smoothly? Have any issues surfaced that have caused tensions? What could be done to prevent recurrence?

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1997 Regional Conferences on
Improving America's Schools

A Call to Action:
Working Together for Equity and Excellence

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email: frc@aed.org website: http://www.dssc.org/frc/

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Academy for Educational Development
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009
Phone (202) 884-8215 / TTY (202) 884-8200 / Fax (202) 884-8443
Website: http://www.dssc.org/frc/
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Funded under the Improving America's School Act (IASA) of 1994, the Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers help recipients of IASA funds improve teaching and learning for all students by encouraging high standards, quality professional development and the use of effective practices based on the latest research.

DESEGREGATION ASSISTANCE CENTERS (DACs)..130

The Desegregation Assistance Centers help district and school personnel create safe, positive and bias-free educational environments for all students. These centers also focus on school districts that experience conflicts arising from efforts to desegregate and remove barriers to equal educational opportunities.

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Funded through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), the Eisenhower Consortia disseminates exemplary mathematics and science education instructional materials and provides technical assistance in the areas of teaching and assessments.

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Based on the premise that increased parental involvement is an integral part of increasing the academic achievement of children, the Goals 2000 Parent Centers are another link in the network that helps families and schools work together to support excellent teaching and high standards for all students.

REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORIES..136

Funded through the Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the Regional Educational Laboratories work with state and local educators to design research and development based training programs, processes and products. The Labs also offer assistance in evaluating education programs, convening state and regional groups, studying the implementation of state policies and synthesizing R&D-based information.

REGIONAL RESOURCE and FEDERAL CENTER PROGRAM..138

Funded through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Regional Resource and Federal Center Program assists state education agencies in improving programs for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families. The Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is the coordinating and funding office of the RRFC Network.

REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION CONSORTIA (RTEC)..139

Funded through the Technology for Education Act of 1994, the RTECs help states, local educational agencies, teachers, school library and media personnel, administrators, and other education entities integrate technologies into K-12 classrooms, and library media centers, adult literacy center, and other educational settings.

SECRETARY'S REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES (SRR)..141

The SRRs serve as Departmental liaisons to state, local, and private education organizations and as advocates for the administration's policies. The SRRs focus on representing the Department's goals and views within the region, particularly in the areas of student financial assistance, civil rights enforcement, vocational rehabilitation services for the disabled, and Inspector General audits and investigations.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PARENT PROGRAMS (TAPP) 143

Funded through the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Department's Parent Training and Information Centers work with parents to participate more effectively in meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities. Provide print materials, electronic communication, teleconferences, national and regional conferences, and consultation.

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Funded through the Department's Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DISSEMINATION NETWORK................................146

Funded through OSERS, these projects disseminate information and publications in special education issues to parents, teachers, school districts, states, institutions of higher education and other special education service providers.

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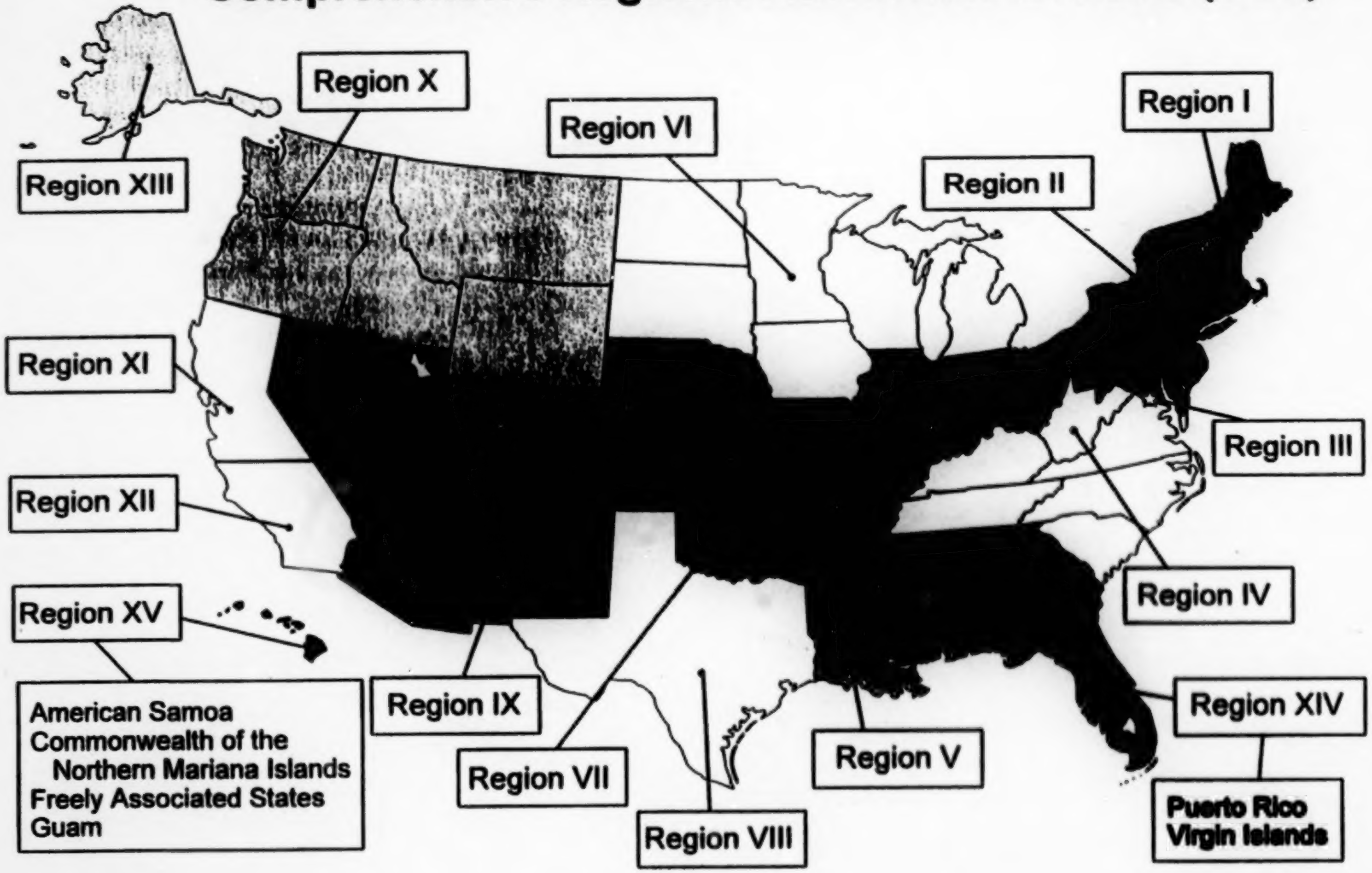
Address specific topics and work with collaborating partners and schools.

Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers (CCs)



COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS (CC)

Region I
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

New England Comprehensive Assistance Center
Wende Allen, Director
Phone: (800) 332-0226
E-mail: wendea@edu.org

Region II
New York State

New York Technical Assistance Center (NYTAC)
LaMar P. Miller, Executive Director
Phone: (800) 469-8224
E-mail: millrla@is2.nyu.edu

Region III
Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC

Region III Comprehensive Center
Charlene Rivera, Director
Phone: (703) 528-3588 or (800) 925-3223
E-mail: crivera@ceee.gwu.edu

Region IV
Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Region IV Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center
Pamela K. Buckley, Executive Director
Phone: (800) 624-9120
E-mail: buckley@ael.org

Region V
Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi

Region 5 Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center
Hai T. Tran, Director
Phone: (504) 838-6861 or (800) 644-8671
E-mail: htran@sedl.org

Region VI
Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin

Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center Consortium - Region VI
Walter G. Secada, Director
Phone: (608) 263-4220
E-mail: wgsecada@facstaff.wisc.edu

Region VII
Illinois, Indiana, Kansas Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma

Region VII Comprehensive Center
Belinda Biscoe, Executive Director
Phone: (405) 325-1729 or (800) 228-1766
E-mail: biscoe@ou.edu

Region VIII
Texas

STAR Center
Dr. Alberto Cortez, Site Director
Phone: (210) 684-8180 or (888) 394-7827
E-mail: acortez@txdirect.net

Region IX
Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah

Southwest Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center
Paul E. Martinez, Director
Phone: (505) 891-6111 or (800) 247-4269
E-mail: pmartinez@cesdp.nmhu.edu

Region X
Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming

Northwest Regional Assistance Center
Carlos Sundermann, Director
Phone: (503) 275-0653 or (800) 547-6339
E-mail: sundermc@nwrel.org

Region XI
Northern California

Comprehensive Assistance Center WestEd
Beverly Farr, Director
Phone: (415) 565-3009 or (800) 64-LEARN
E-mail: bfarr@wested.org

Region XII
Southern California

Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center
Henry Mothner, Director
Phone: (562) 922-6343
E-mail: mothner_henry@lacoe.edu

Region XIII
Alaska

Alaska Comprehensive Regional Assistance Center
JoAnn Henderson, Director
Phone: (907) 586-6806
E-mail: joannh@akrac.k12.ak.us

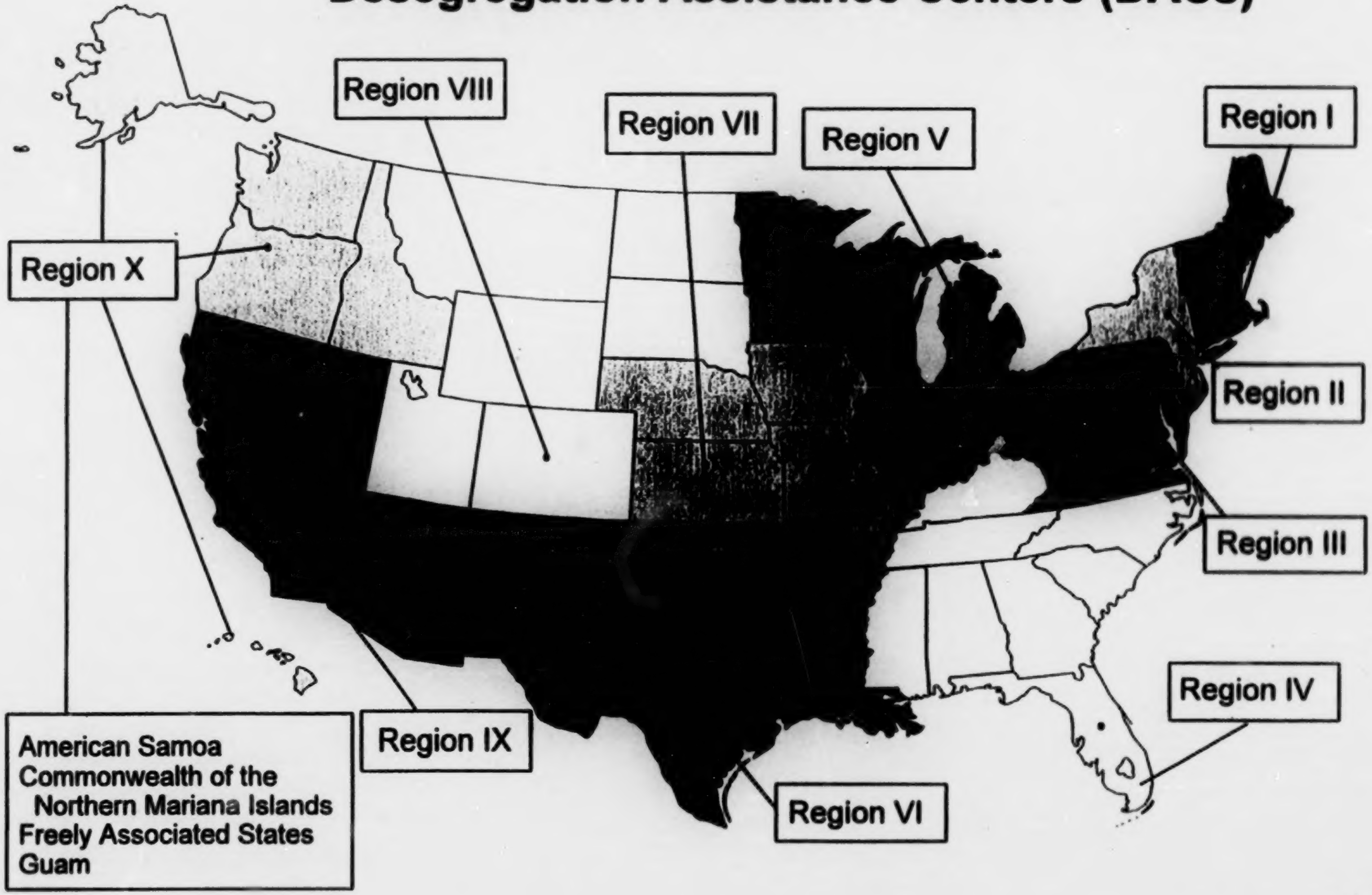
Region XIV
Florida, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Comprehensive Assistance Center
Trudy Hensley, Director
Phone: (770) 723-7434 or (800) 241-3865
E-mail: thensley@ets.org

Region XV
American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau

Pacific Comprehensive Assistance Center
Thomas W. Barlow, Executive Director
Phone: (808) 533-6000
E-mail: barlowt@prel.hawaii.edu

Desegregation Assistance Centers (DACs)



DESEGREGATION ASSISTANCE CENTERS (DAC)

Region I
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

New England Desegregation Assistance Center
John R. Carreiro, Director
Phone: (401) 274-9548
E-mail: john_carreiro@brown.edu

Region II
New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Equity Assistance Center
Joan Dawson, Director
Phone: (212) 998-5100
E-mail: jdawson@is2.nyu.edu

Region III
Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, DC

Mid-Atlantic Center
Sheryl Denbo, Executive Director
Phone: (301) 657-7741
E-mail: mae@nicom.com

Region IV
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Southeastern Equity Center
Nancy L. Peck, Director
Phone: (305) 669-0114
E-mail: sedac@aol.com

Region V
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Program for Educational Opportunity
Percy Bates, Director
Phone: (313) 763-9910
E-mail: eqty@umich.edu

Region VI
Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

South Central Collaborative Desegregation Assistance Center
Bradley Scott, Director
Phone: (210) 684-8180
E-mail: bscott@idra.org

Region VII
Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

Midwest Desegregation Assistance Center
Charles I. Rankin, Director
Phone: (913) 532-6408
E-mail: ronna@coe.educ.ksu.edu

Region VIII
Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Educational Equity Center Region VIII
Gerald Brown, Director
Phone: (303) 556-8494
E-mail: brown@mscd.edu

Region IX
Arizona, California, Nevada

Desegregation Assistance Center
Anthony Sancho, Director
Phone: (310) 598-7661
E-mail: asancho@wested.org

Region X
Alaska, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, Washington

Center for National Origin, Race and Sex Equity
Joyce Braden Harris, Director
Phone: (503) 275-9507
E-mail: harrisj@nwrel.org

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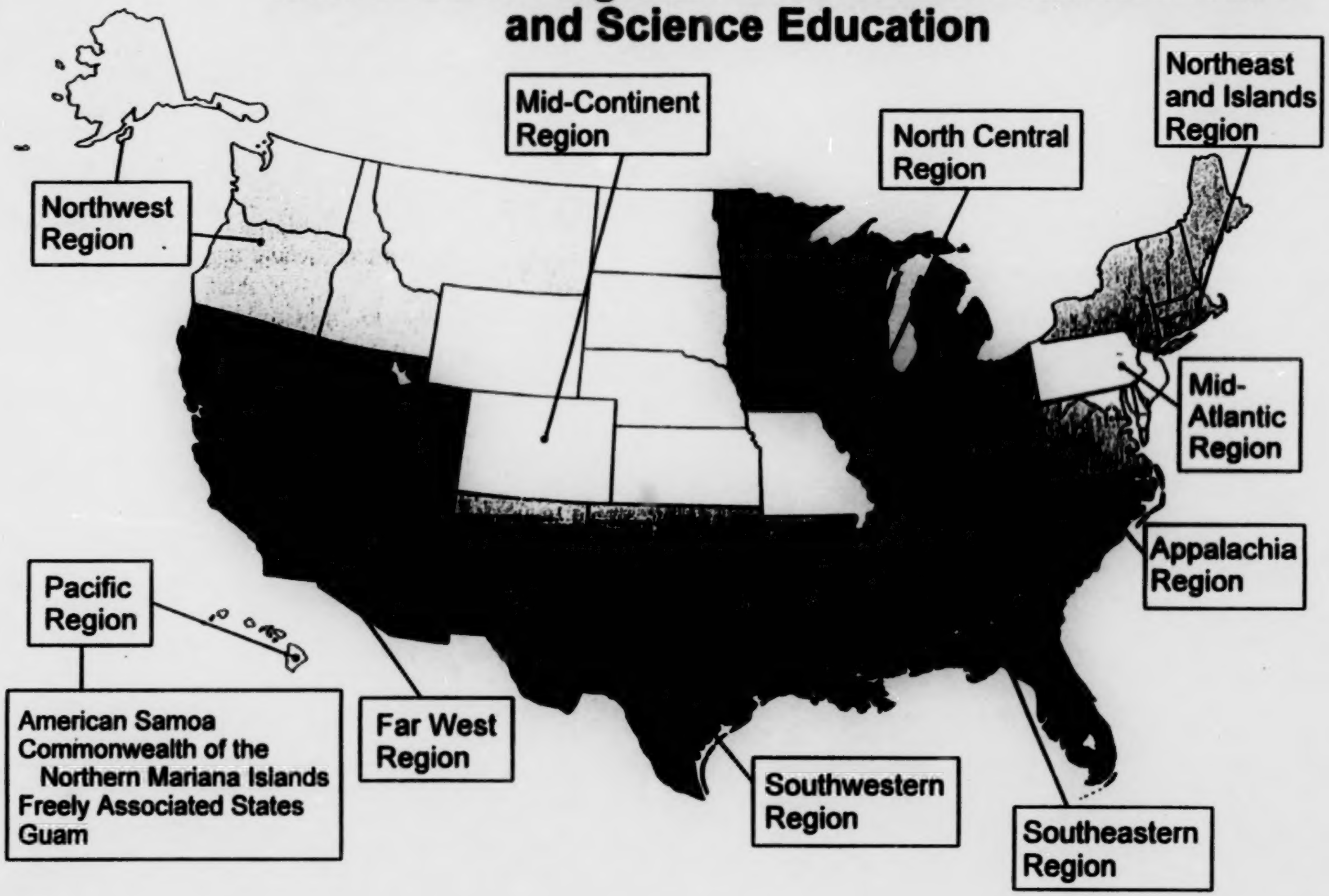

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Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science
Pam Buckley, Director
Phone: (304) 347-0400
E-mail: buckleyp@ael.org

Mid-Continent Region
Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming

High Plains Consortium for Mathematics and Science
John Sutton, Director
Phone: (800)949-6387
E-mail: jsutton@mcrel.org

Mid-Atlantic Region
Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC

Mid-Atlantic Regional Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education
Keith Kershner, Director
Phone: (215) 574-9300
E-mail: kershern@rbs.org

North Central Region
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Midwest Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education
Gil Valdez, Director
Phone: (630) 571-4700
E-mail: valdez@ncrel.org

Northeast and Islands Region
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Eisenhower Regional Alliance for Mathematics and Science Education Reform
Mark Kaufman, Director
Phone: (617) 547-0430
E-mail: mark_kaufman@terc.edu

Northwest Region
Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington

Science and Mathematics Consortium for North West Schools (SMCNWS)
Ralph Nelson, Director
Phone: (503) 760-2346
E-mail: ralph@col-ed.org

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Pacific Mathematics and Science Regional Consortium Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)
Paul Dumas, Director
Phone: (808) 533-6000
E-mail: askprel@prel.hawaii.edu

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Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina

Eisenhower Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education at SERVE
Francena Cummings, Director
Phone: (904) 671-6033
E-mail: fcumming@serve.org

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Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Eisenhower Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching
Wes Hoover, Director
Phone: (512) 476-6861
E-mail: whoover@sedl.org

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Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah

WestEd Eisenhower Regional Consortium for Science and Mathematics
Art Sussman and Steve Schneider, Co-Directors
Phone: (415) 241-2730
E-mail: assusma@wested.org and sschnei@wested.org

Capital Collection

Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC)
Len Simutis, Director
Phone: (614) 292-7784
E-mail: simutis@enc.org

GOALS 2000 PARENT CENTERS

Alabama
Carol Blade, Director
Phone: (334) 478-1208
E-mail: seacmob1@juno.com

Arkansas
Nicholas Long, Director
Phone: (501) 320-4605
E-mail: nlong@ddcchild.ach.uams.edu

California
Ernie Salgado, Director
Phone: (909) 654-2781

Colorado
Judy Kaufman, Contact
Phone: (303) 820-5634
E-mail: hn3781@handsnet.org

District of Columbia
Audrey Epperson, Director
Phone: (202) 265-8200

Florida
Mary Lindsey, Director
Phone: (813) 974-4858

Georgia
Wanda Torbert, Director
Phone: (912) 888-0999
E-mail: lborders@surfsouth.com

Guam
Stephanie Smith
Phone: (671) 735-1400
E-mail: sanctuar@ite.net

Hawaii
Helenann Lauber, Director
Phone: (808) 841-6177

Illinois
Sam Redding, Executive Director
Phone: (217) 732-6462
E-mail: adi@abelink.com

Indiana
Donna Olson, Executive Director
Phone: (317) 257-8683
E-mail: ipin@indy.net

Iowa
Ron Mirr, Director
Phone: (319) 354-5606
E-mail: ronmirr@inav.net

Kentucky
Judy L. Planck, Director
Phone: (606) 845-0081

Louisiana
Mary McClure, Executive Director
Phone: (504) 926-3820

Maine
Christine Snook, Project Director
Phone: (207) 582-2504
E-mail: lachance@SATURN.caps.maine.edu

Maryland
Carol Walsh, Project Director
Phone: (301) 424-5666

Massachusetts
Luz Santana, Project Director
Phone: (617) 628-4070
E-mail: hn5767@handsnet.org

Michigan
Deanna DePree, Director
Phone: (616) 396-7566
E-mail: lss-cis@iserv.net

Minnesota
Sharmin Davis Jamison, Project Coordinator
Phone: (612) 827-2966
E-mail: mnpacer@edu.gte.net

Mississippi
Jane P. Boykin, Director
Phone: (601) 355-4911
E-mail: mississippiforum@teclink.net

Missouri
Barry Freedman, Director
Phone: (314) 291-4443
E-mail: schnell@icon-stl.net

Nebraska
Richard Nation, Director
Phone: (402) 729-2278

New Hampshire
Deborah Bennis, Project Director
Phone: (603) 224-7005
E-mail: ticnh@aol.com

New Jersey
Dina Lennon, Program Developer
Phone: (973) 643-3710
E-mail: preventchildabuse@worldnet.att.net

New York
Patricia Edwards
Phone: (716) 246-5681

Nevada
Leisa Whittum, Director
Phone: (702) 731-8373
E-mail: sunrisel@vegas.infi.net

North Carolina
Connie Hawkins, Executive Director
Phone: (704) 892-1321
E-mail: ecacl@aol.com

North Dakota
Kathryn Erickson, Director
Phone: (701) 852-9426
E-mail: NDPATH01@minot.ndak.net

Ohio
Elizabeth Yaryan, Director
Phone: (513) 272-0273

Oklahoma
Pat Lowther, Director
Phone: (405) 478-4078
E-mail: papie@icon.net

Oregon
Lisa Guy
Phone: (503) 282-1986

Pennsylvania
Barbara Mooney, Director
Phone: (412) 852-2893
E-mail: casw@greenepa.net

Rhode Island
Deanna Forist, Executive Director
Phone: (401) 727-4144

South Carolina
John S. Niblock, Director
Phone: (803) 343-5510

South Dakota
Mary Baumeister, Director
Phone: (605) 347-4467
E-mail: maryb@bhssc.tie.net

Tennessee
Beverly Robinson, Director
Phone: (615) 255-4982

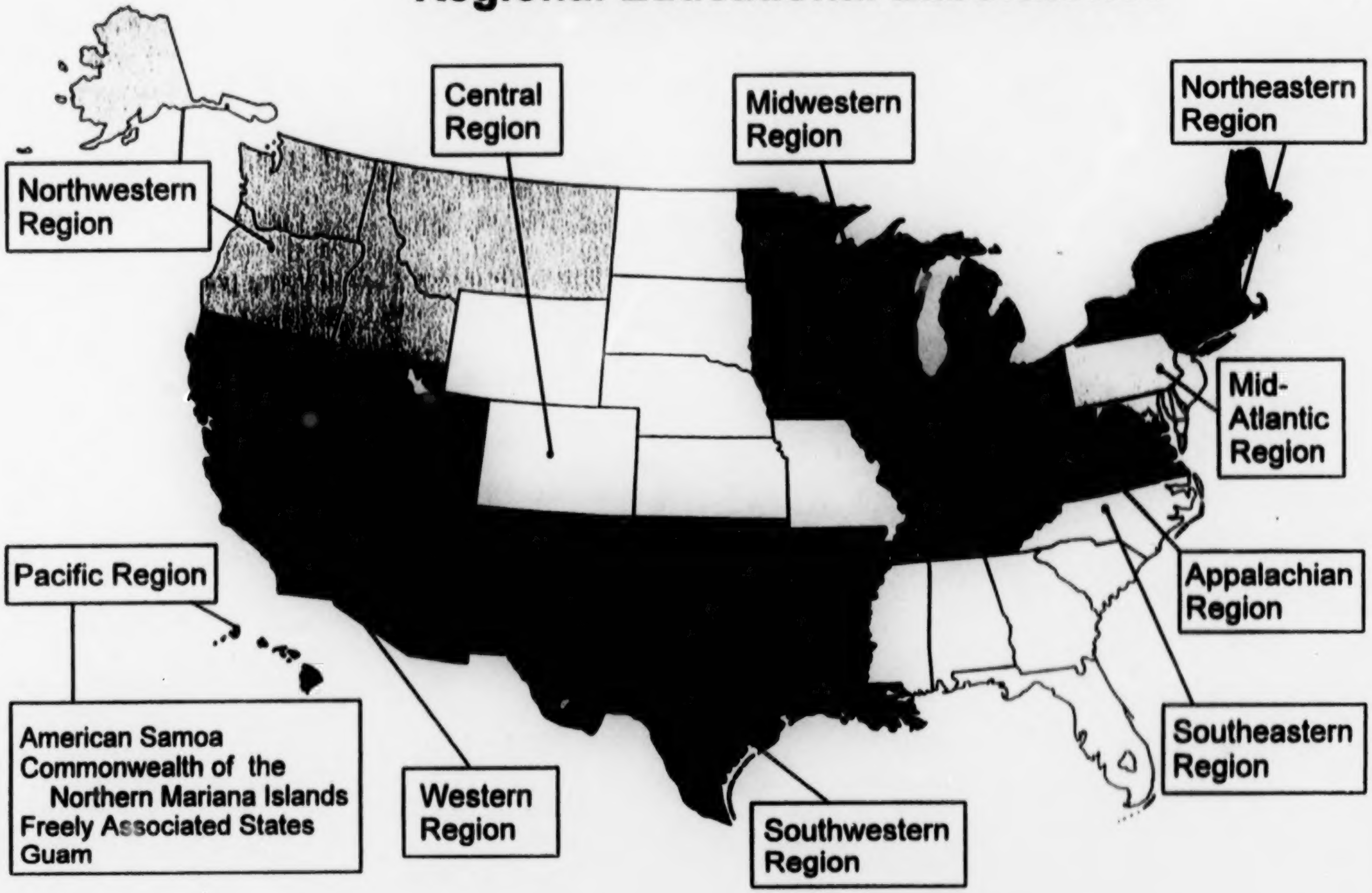
Texas
Mary Ellen Nudd, Director
Phone: (512) 454-3706
E-mail: hn6649@handsnet.org

Vermont
Sue Harding/Howard Russell, Co-Directors
Phone: (802) 388-1590

Washington
Marilyn Littlejohn, Director
Phone: (253) 850-2566
E-mail: CHSEHS@aolcom

Wisconsin
Susan R. Werley, Director
Phone: (920) 729-1787

Regional Educational Laboratories



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Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah

WestEd
Glen Harvey, Director
Phone: (415) 565-3000
E-mail: tross@fwl.org

Central Region
Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming

Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory (MCREL)
J. Timothy Waters, Executive Director
Phone: (303) 337-0990
E-mail: twaters@mcrel.org

Midwestern Region
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)
Jeri Nowakowski, Executive Director
Phone: (630) 571-4700
E-mail: info@ncrel.org

Northwestern Region
Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL)
Ethel Simon-McWilliams, Executive Director
Phone: (503) 275-9500 or (800) 547-6339
E-mail: info@nwrel.org

Pacific Region
American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)
John Kofel, Executive Director
Phone: (808) 533-6000
E-mail: kofelj@prel-oahu-1.pre.hawaii.edu

Northeastern Region
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virgin Islands

Northeast and Islands Laboratory at Brown University (LAB)
Phil Zarlengo, Executive Director
Phone: (401) 274-9548 or (800) 521-9550
E-mail: Phil_Zarlengo@Brown.edu

Mid-Atlantic Region
Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington, DC

Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS)
Margaret Wang, Executive Director
Phone: (215) 204-3001
E-mail: lss@vm.temple.edu

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SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)
Roy Forbes, Executive Director
Phone: (910) 334-3211 or (800) 755-3277
E-mail: rforbes@serve.org

Southwestern Region
Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)
Wesley Hoover, Executive Director
Phone: (512) 476-6861
E-mail: whoover@sedl.org

Appalachia Region
Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc. (AEL)
Terry Eidell, Director
Phone: (304) 347-0400 or (800) 624-9120
E-mail: eidellt@ael.org

REGIONAL RESOURCE AND FEDERAL CENTER PROGRAM (RRFC)

Federal Resource Center for Special Education (FRC)
Carol Valdivieso, Director
Phone: (202) 884-8215
E-mail: frc@aed.org

Region I
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC)
Edward Wilkens, Director
Phone: (802) 658-5036
E-mail: NERRCwilks@aol.com

Region II
Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, DC, West Virginia

Mid-South Regional Resource Center (MSRRC)
Ken Olsen, Director
Phone: (606) 257-4921
E-mail: MSRRC@ihdi.ihdi.uky.edu

Region III
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Texas, Virgin Islands

South Atlantic Regional Resource Center (SARCC)
Tim Kelly, Director
Phone: (954) 473-6106
E-mail: SARCC@acc.fau.edu

Region IV
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin

Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center (GLARRC)
Larry Magliocca, Director
Phone: (614) 447-0844
E-mail: marshall.76@osu.edu

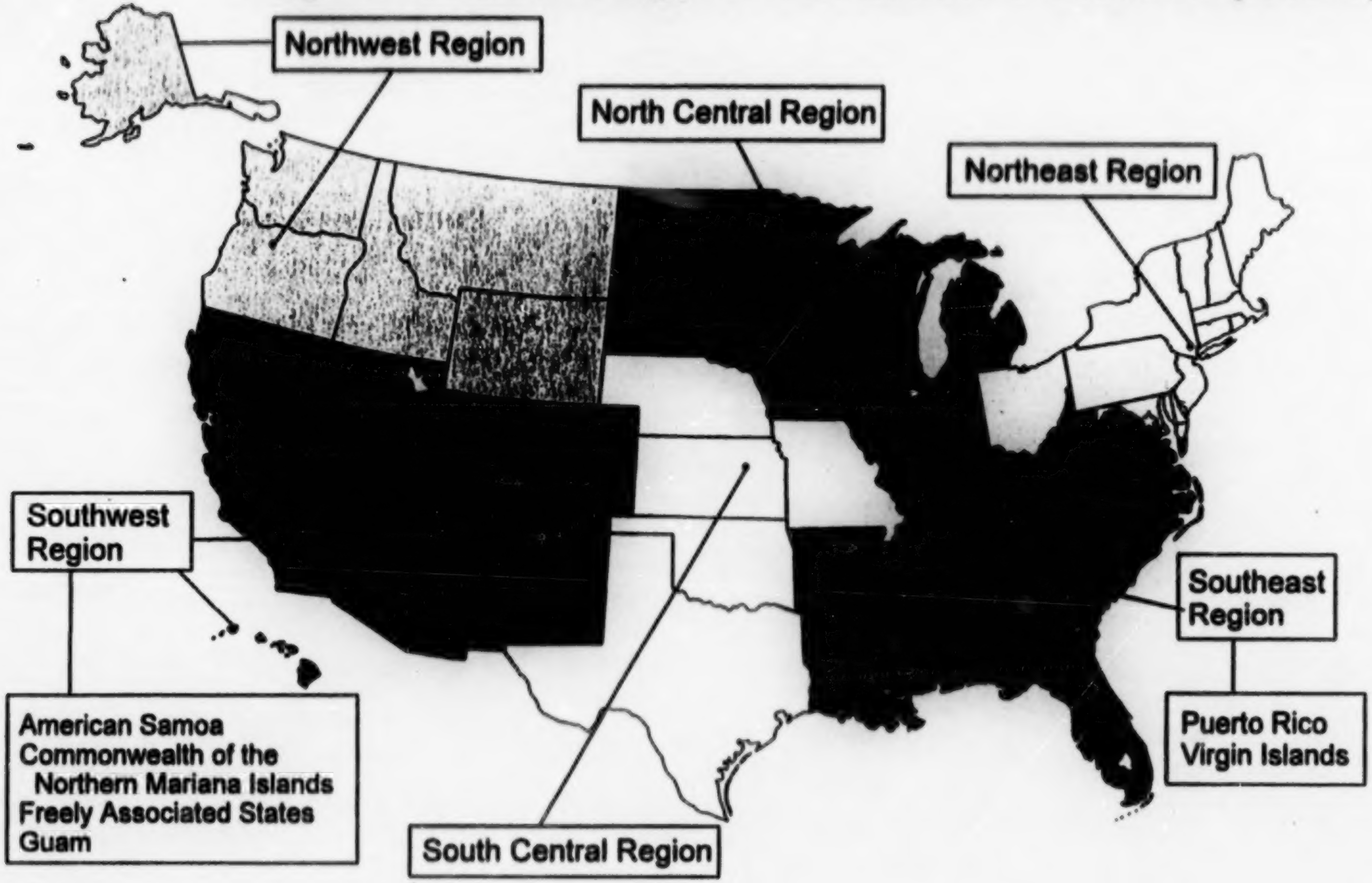
Region V
Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC)
John Copenhaver, Director
Phone: (801) 752-0238
E-mail: cope@cc.usu.edu

Region VI
Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, Washington

Western Regional Resource Center (WRRC)
Richard Zeller, Director
Phone: (541) 346-5641
E-mail: DLS@oregon.uoregon.edu

Regional Technology in Education Consortia (RTEC)



REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION CONSORTIA (RTEC)

North Central Region
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
Jeri Nowakowski, Executive Director
Phone: (630) 571-4700
E-mail: info@ncrel.org

Northwest Region
Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming

Northwest Educational Technology Consortium
Seymour Hanfling, Project Director
Phone: (503) 275-0650
E-mail: netc@nwrel.org

South Central Region
Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas

South Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium
Jerry Chaffin and Ron Aust, Co-Directors
Phone: (913) 863-0699 or (888) TEC-2001
E-mail: info@scrtec.org

Southwest Region
American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau

Pacific-Southwest Regional Technology in Education Consortium
Kevin Rocap and Raynette Sanchez, Co-Directors
Phone: (562) 985-1570
E-mail: clmer@csulb.edu

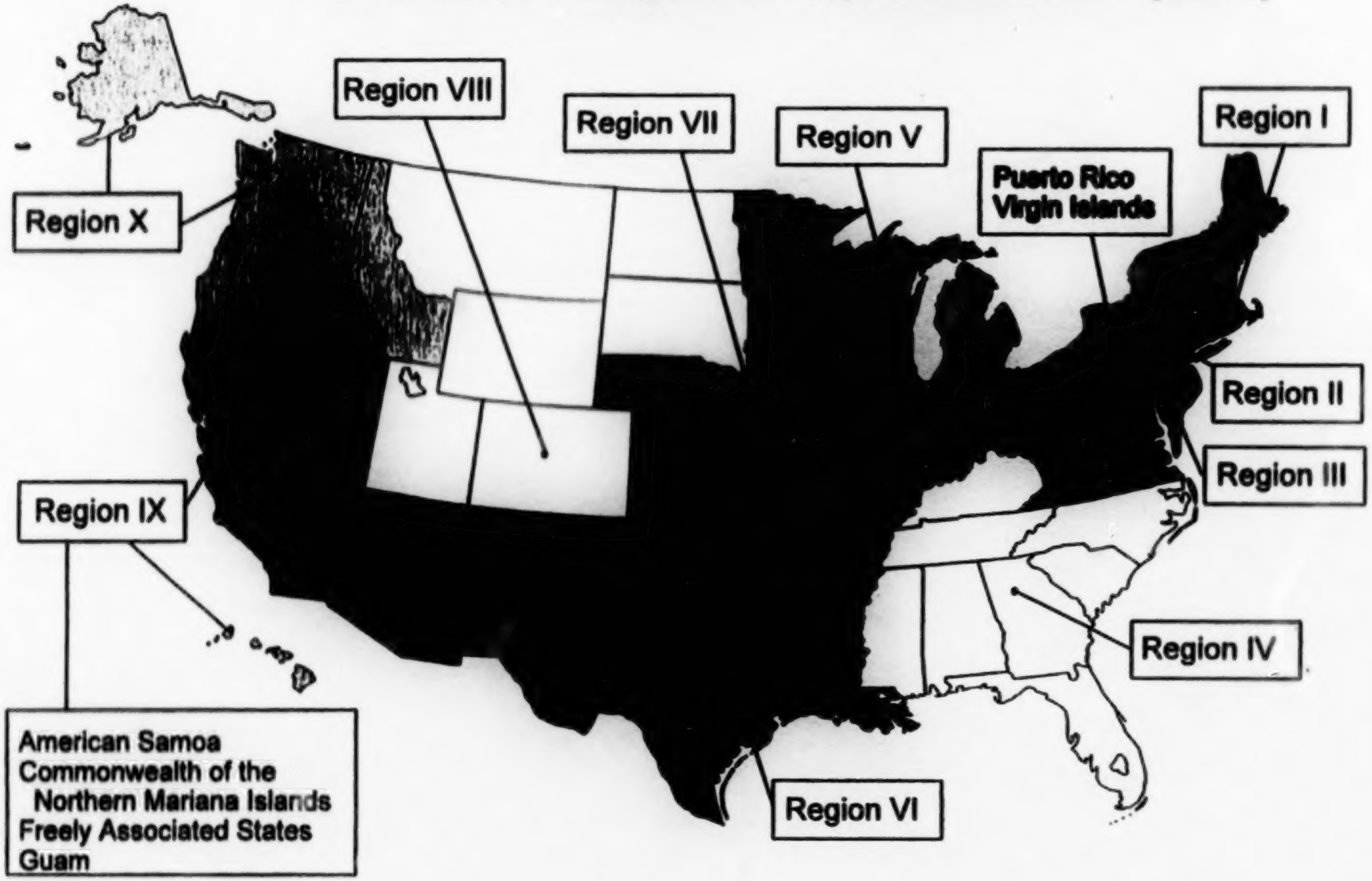
Northeast Region
Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, DC

Northeast Regional Technology in Education Consortium
Bonnie Brownstein and Michael Ribaudo, Co-Directors
Phone: (212) 541-0972
E-mail: blbbh@cunyvm.cuny.edu and ribbh@cunyvm.cuny.edu

Southeast Region
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Virgin Islands, West Virginia

SouthEastern and Island Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR*TEC)
Don Holznagel, Director
Phone: (800) 377-5011 or (404) 893-0100
E-mail: seirtec@serve.org

Secretary's Regional Representatives (SRR)



SECRETARY'S REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES (SRR)

Region I
Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Department of Education
Secretary's Regional Representative (SRR): Jan Paschal
Deputy Secretary's Regional Representative (DSRR): Ralph Wright
Phone: (617) 223-9317
E-mail: jan_paschal@ed.gov
ralph_wright@ed.gov

Region II
New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Department of Education
SRR: John Mahoney
DSRR: Patricia Parisi
Phone: (212) 264-7005
E-mail: john_mahoney@ed.gov
patricia_parisi@ed.gov

Region III
Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, DC, West Virginia

Department of Education
SRR: W. Wilson Goode
Phone: (215) 596-1001
E-mail: wilson_goode@ed.gov

Region IV
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Department of Education
SRR: Stan Williams
DSRR: Judith W. Harwood
Phone: (404) 562-6225
E-mail: stan_williams@ed.gov
judith_harwood@ed.gov

Region V
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Department of Education
SRR: Stephanie Jones
Phone: (312) 353-5215
E-mail: step_jones@ed.gov

Region VI
Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

Department of Education
SRR: Sally H. Cain
DSRR: Trini Garza
Phone: (214) 767-3626
E-mail: sally_cain@ed.gov
trini_garza@ed.gov

Region VII
Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

Department of Education
SRR: Sandra V. Walker
Phone: (816) 880-4000
E-mail: sandra_walker@ed.gov

Region VIII
Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

Department of Education
SRR: Lynn O. Simmons
Phone: (303) 844-3544
E-mail: lynn_simmons@ed.gov

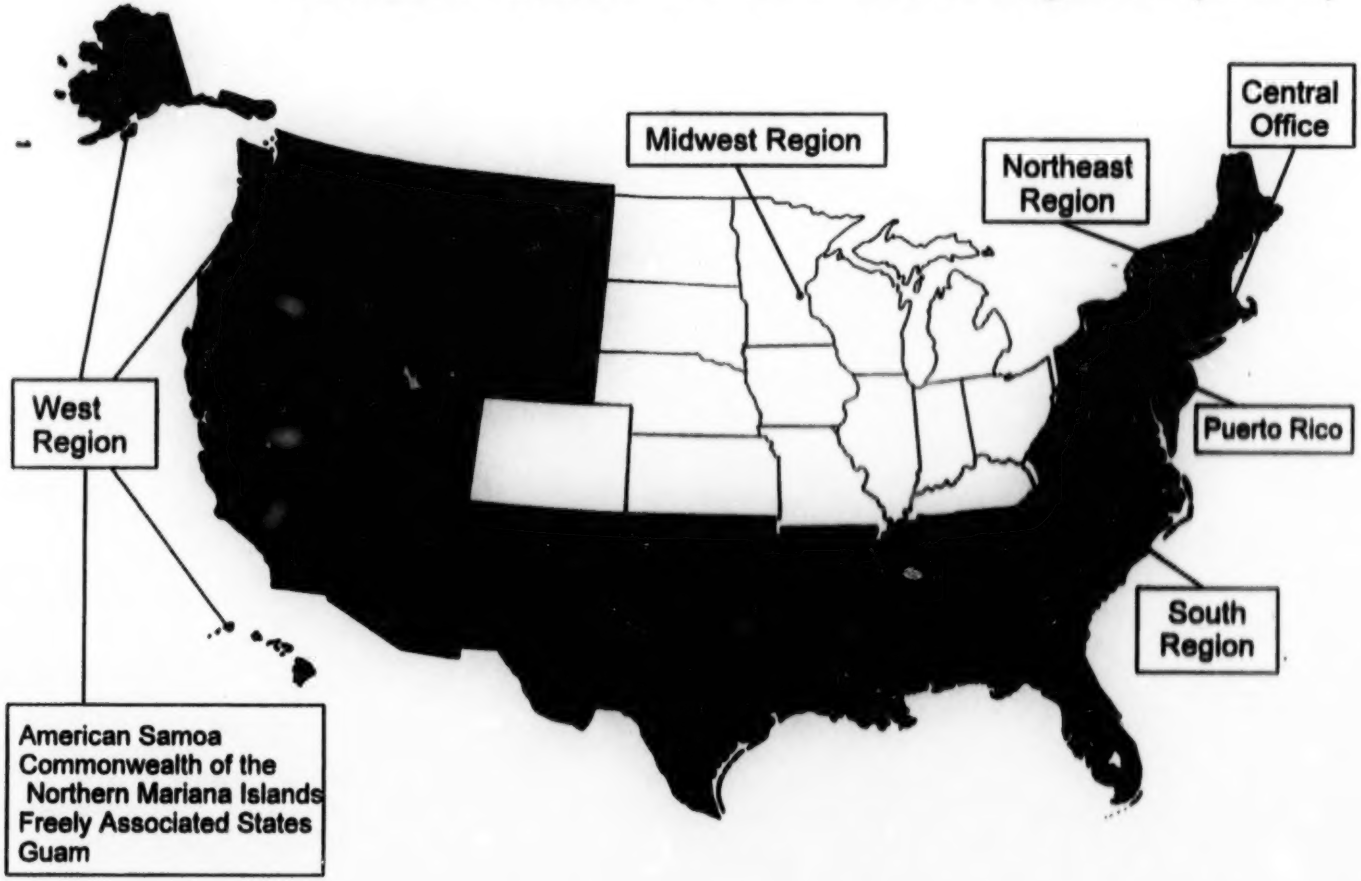
Region IX
American Samoa, Arizona, California, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Nevada, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau

Department of Education
SRR: Loni Hancock
Phone: (415) 437-7520
E-mail: loni_hancock@ed.gov

Region X
Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

Department of Education
SRR: Carla Nuxoll
Phone: (206) 220-7800
E-mail: karen_davies@ed.gov

Technical Assistance for Parent Programs (TAPP)



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PARENT PROGRAMS (TAPP)

Central Office

Federation for Children with Special Needs
Richard Robinson, Executive Director
TAPP
Martha Ziegler, Director
Phone: (617) 482-2915
E-mail: fcsninfo@bitwise.net

West Region

Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Washington (PAVE)
Joanne Butts, Regional Director
Phone: (206) 565-2266 (Voice/TTY)
E-mail: wapave9@idt.net

Northeast Region

Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virgin Islands, Washington, DC

Parent Information Center
Judith Raskin, Regional TA Director
Phone: (603) 224-7005 (Voice/TDD)
E-mail: picnh@aol.com

Midwest Region

Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

PACER Center
Paula Goldberg, Regional Director
Susan Folger, TA Facilitator
Phone: (612) 827-2966 (Voice/TDD) or
(800) 53-PACER
E-mail: mnpacer@edu.gte.net

South

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
Connie Hawkins, Regional TA Director
Phone: (704) 892-1321
E-mail: ecacl@aol.com

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE)
David Stern, Director
Phone: (510) 642-4004
E-mail: ncrve@vocserve.berkeley.edu

SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DISSEMINATION NETWORK

Clearinghouses
ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
Bernadette Knoblaugh, Director
Phone: (800) 328-0272
E-mail: ericec@cec.sped.org

HEATH Resource Center
Rhona Hartman, Director
Phone: (202) 939-9320 (Voice/TTY) or
(800) 544-3284 (Voice/TTY)
E-mail: Heath@ace.nche.edu

National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education
Sara Conlon, Director
Phone: (703) 264-9476 or (800) 641-7824
E-mail: ncpse@cec.sped.org

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
Suzanne Ripley, Director
Phone: (202) 884-8200 (Voice/TTY)
E-mail: nichcy@aed.org

National Information Clearinghouse on Children who are Deaf-Blind (DB-LINK)
John Reiman, Director
Phone: (800) 438-9376
E-mail: dblink@tr.wou.osshe.edu

Deaf/Blind
National Technical Assistance Consortium for Children and Young Adults who are Deaf-Blind (NTAC)
Bruce Dalke, Director

Teaching Research
Phone: (503) 838-8293

Helen Keller National Center
Phone: (516) 944-8900 x307
E-mail: ntac@fstr.wou.osshe.edu

Early Childhood
National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NEC*TAS)
Pascal Trohanis, Director
Phone: (919) 962-2001
E-mail: nectasta.nectas@mhs.unc.edu

Finance
Center for Special Education Finance (CSEF)
Jay Chambers/Thomas Parrish, Co-Directors
Phone: (650) 493-3550
E-mail: csef@air-ca.org

Inclusion
Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices (CISP)
Christine Salisbury, Director
Phone: (412) 359-1600
E-mail: mcnutt@pgh.auhs.edu

Minorities
Alliance 2000 Project
West Desk: Technical Assistance
Deborah Smith, Director
Phone: (800) 831-6134
E-mail: alliance@unm.edu

Alliance 2000 Project
East Desk: Knowledge Production and Linkages
Judy Smith-Davis, Director
Phone: (703) 239-1557
E-mail: judysd@EDU.GTE.NET

Center of Minority Research in Special Education (COMRISE)
University of Virginia
Phone: (804) 924-1022

Parents
Parents Engaged in Education Reform PEER)Project: Goals 2000 and Children with Disabilities
Carolyn Romano, Charlotte "Dee" Spinkston,
Co-Directors
Phone: (617) 482-2915
E-mail: ggabbard@fcsn.org

Outcomes
National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO)
James Ysseldyke, Director
Phone: (612) 626-1530
E-mail: scott027@maroon.tc.umn.edu

Personnel Preparation
Networking System for Training Education Personnel (NSTEP)
Karl Murray, Director
Phone: (703) 519-3800
E-mail: karlm@nasdse.org

Technology
Technology, Educational Media, and Materials Program
David Osher, Director
Phone: (202) 342-5600
E-mail: Dosher@air-dc.org

Transition

National Transition Alliance for Youths with Disabilities
Frank Rusch, Director
Phone: (217) 333-2325 (Voice/TTY)
E-mail: leachlyn@uxl.cso.uiuc.edu

National Transition Network (NTN)
David Johnson, Director
Phone: (612) 626-8200
E-mail: Guyxx002@maroon.tc.umn.edu

Other Projects

National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators
Douglas Carnine, Director
Phone: (503) 683-7543
E-mail: Douglas_Carnine@ccmail.uoregon.edu

Project FORUM
Eileen Ahearn, Director
Phone: (703) 519-3800
E-mail: eahearn@nasdse.org

Technical Assistance in Data Analysis, Evaluation, and Report Preparation
Marsha Brauen, Director
Phone: (301) 738-3668
E-mail: Brauenml@westat.com

The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice
David Osher, Director
Phone: (202) 944-5400
E-mail: center@air-dc.org

NATIONAL RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

To address nationally significant problems and issues in education, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, through its five National Institutes, supports university-based national educational research and development centers. The centers address specific topics such as early childhood development and education, student learning and achievement in English, cultural and linguistic diversity and second language learning, and postsecondary improvement. In addition, each center has collaborating partners, and many work with elementary and secondary schools. Centers may be contacted directly for a catalog of their publications and services.

Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE)
Director: Roland Tharp
Phone: (408) 459-3500
Web site: http://www.cal.org/crede/

Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At-Risk (CRESPAR)
Co-directors: Robert Slavin (Johns Hopkins) and A. Wade Boykin (Howard)
Phones: (202) 806-8484 & (410) 516-8800
Web site:
http://scov.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/CReSPaR.html

Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST)
Co-directors: Eva L. Baker and Robert Linn
Phone: (310) 206-1530
Web site: http://cresst96.cse.ucla.edu

Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA)
Director: Elfrieda H. Hiebert
Phone: (734) 764-1817
Web site: forthcoming

Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CTP)
Director: Michael Knapp
Phone: (206) 543-1836
Web site: forthcoming

National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL)
Director: Don Bailey
Phone: (919) 966-4250
Web site: http://www.fpg.unc.edu/ncedl/

National Center for Improving Student Learning and Achievement in Mathematics and Science
Director: Thomas A. Romberg
Phone: (608) 263-4285
Web Site: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/NCISLA/

National Center for Postsecondary Improvement (NCPI)
Director: Patricia J. Gumport
Phone: (650) 723-7724
Web site: http://ncpi.stanford.edu

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)
Director: John P. Comings
Phone: (617) 495-4843
Web Site: http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~ncsall

National Center on Increasing the Effectiveness of State and Local Education Reform Efforts
Director: Susan Fuhrman
Phone: (215) 573-0700
Web site: http://www.upenn.edu/gse/cpre

National Research & Development Center on English Learning & Achievement (CELA)
Co-directors: Judith Langer, Arthur Applebee, and Martin Nystrand
Phone: (518) 442-5026
Web site: http://www.albany.edu/cela/

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT)
Director: Joseph S. Renzulli
Phone: (860)486-4676
Web site:
http://www.ucc.uconn.edu/~wwwgt/nrcgt.html

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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